

GRACE

Abounding to the chief of Sinners:

O R,

A Brief and Faithful

RELATION

Of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ,
to his poor Servant

JOHN BUNYAN.

Wherein is particularly shewed, The manner of his Conversion, his fight and trouble for Sin, his Dreadful Temptations, also how he despaired of Gods mercy, and how the Lord at length thorow Christ did deliver him from all the guilt and terrour that lay upon him.

Whereunto is added,

A brief Relation of his Call to the Work of the Ministry, of his Temptations therein, as also what he hath met with in Prison.

All which was written by his own hand there, and now published for the support of the weak and tempted People of God.

Come and hear, all ye that fear God; and I will declare what he hath done for my soul, Psal. 66. 16.

L O N D O N:

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A PREFACE:

Or brief Account of the publishing of this Work :

Written by the Author thereof,
and dedicated to those whom
God hath counted him worthy to beget to Faith, by his
Ministry in the Word.

C Hildren, Grace be with
you, Amen. I being taken
from you in presence,
and so tied up, that I cannot
perform that duty
that from God doth lie upon me, to
you-ward, for your further edifying
and building up in Faith and Holiness,
&c. Yet that you may see my

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Soul hath fatherly care and desire after your spiritual and everlasting welfare; I now once again, as from the top of Shenir and Hermon, so from the Lions Dens, and from the Mountains of the Leopards, (Song 4. 8.) do look yet after you all, greatly longing to see your safe arrival into THE desired Haven.

I thank God upon every Remembrance of you, and rejoyce even while I stick between the Teeth of the Lions in the Wilderness, at the grace, and mercy, and knowledge of Christ our Saviour, which God hath bestowed upon you, with abundance of Faith and Love. Your hungerings and thirstings also after further acquaintance with the Father in his Son; your tenderness of Heart, your trembling at sin, your sober and holy deportment also, before both God and men, is great refreshment to me: for you are my glory and joy, 1 Thes. 2. 20.

*I have sent you here enclosed a drop of that honey, that I have taken out of
the*

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the Carcase of a Lyon, Judg. 14. 5, 6, 7, 8. I have eaten thereof my self also, and am much refreshed thereby. (Temptations when we meet them at first, are as the Lyon that roared upon Sampson: but if we overcome them, the next time we see them, we shall finde a Nest of Honey within them.) The Philistians understand me not. It is a Relation of the work of God upon my own Soul, even from the very first, till now; wherein you may perceive my castings down, and raisings up: for he woundeth, and his hands make whole. It is written in the Scripture, Isai. 38. 19. The father to the children shall make known the truth of God. Yea, it was for this reason I lay so long at Sinai, (Lev. 4. 10, 11.) to see the fire, and the cloud, and the darkness, that I might fear the Lord all the days of my life upon earth, and tell of his wondrous works to my children, Psal. 78. 3, 4, 5.

Moses, Numb. 33. 1, 2. writ of the

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Journeyings of the children of Israel from Egypt to the Land of Canaan; and commanded also, that they did remember their forty years travel in the wilderness. Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no, Deut. 8. 2, 3. Wherefore this I have endeavoured to do; and not onely so, but to publish it also; that, if God will, others may be put in remembrance of what he hath done for their Souls, by reading his work upon me.

It is profitable for Christians to be often calling to mind the very beginnings of Grace with their Souls. It is a night to be much observed to the Lord, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt. This is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations, Exod. 12. 42. My God, saith David,

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David, Psal. 42. 6. my soul is cast down within me ; but I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. He remembred also the Lyon and the Bear , when he went to fight with the Giant of Gath, 1 Sam. 17. 36, 37.

It was Pauls accustomed manner, Acts 22. and that when tried for his life, Acts 24. even to open before his Judges the manner of his Conversion: He would think of that day and that hour, in the which he first did meet with Grace : for he found it supports unto him When God had brought the children of Israel thorow the Red Sea, far into the wilderNESS; yet they must turn quite about thither again, to remember the drowning of their enemies there, Num. 14. 25. for though they sang his praise before, yet they soon forgot his works, Psal. 106. 11, 12.

In this Discourse of mine, you may see much; much, I say, of the Grace
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of God towards me : I thank God I can count it much ; for it was above my sins, and Satans temptations too. I can remember my fears, and doubts, and sad moneths, with comfort ; they are as the head of Goliath in my hand : there was nothing to David like Goliaths sword , even that sword that should have been sheathed in his bowels ; for the very sight and remembrance of that, did preach forth Gods Deliverance to him. O the remembrance of my great sins , of my great temptations, and of my great fears of perishing for ever ! They bring fresh into my mind, the remembrance of my great help , my great support from Heaven, and the great grace that God extended to such a Wretch as I.

My dear Children, call to mind the former days , the years of ancient times ; remember also your songs in the night , and commune with your own heart, Psal. 73. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Yea, look diligently, and leave no corner therein unsearched, for there is
treas-

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treasure hid, even the treasure of your first and second experience of the grace of God toward you. Remember, I say, the Word that first laid hold upon you; remember your terrors of conscience, and fear of death and hell: remember also your tears and prayers to God; yea, how you sighed under every hedge for mercy. Have you never a Hill Mizar to remember? Have you forgot the Close, the Milk-house, the Stable, the Barn, and the like, where God did visit your Soul? Remember also the Word, the Word, I say, upon which the Lord hath caused you to hope: If you have sinned against light, if you are tempted to blaspheme, if you are down in despair, if you think God fights against you, or if heaven is hid from your eyes; remember 'twas thus with your Father, but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

I could have enlarged much in this my discourse of my temptations and troubles for sin, as also of the merciful kind.

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kindness and working of God with my Soul: I could also have stept into a stile much higher then this in which I have here discoursed, and could have adorned all things more then here I have seemed to do: but I dare not: God did not play in convincing of me; the Devil did not play in tempting of me; neither did I play when I sunk as into a bottomless pit, when the pangs of hell caught hold upon me: wherefore I may not play in my relating of them, but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was: He that liketh it, let him receive it; and he that does not, let him produce a better. Farewel.

*My dear Children,
The Milk and Honey is beyond this Wilderness: God be merciful to you, and grant you be not slothful to go in to possess the Land.*

Jo. Bunyan.

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A Brief Relation

Of the exceeding mercy of God
in Christ, to his poor Servant
John Bunyan.

✠✠✠✠✠ N this my relation of the merciful
✠ working of God upon my Soul, it
✠ will not be amiss, if in the first place
✠ I do in a few words give you a hint
✠ of my pedigree, and manner of
✠ bringing up; that thereby the good-
✠ ness and bounty of God towards me,
may be the more advanced and magnified before
the sons of men.

2. For my descent then, it was, as is well known
by many, of a low and inconsiderable generation;
my fathers house being of that rank that is mean-
est, and most despised of all the families in the
land. Wherefore I have not here, as others, to
boast

boast of Noble blood, or of a High-born state according to the flesh: though all things considered, I magnifie the Heavenly Majesty, for that by this door he brought me into this world, to partake of the Grace and Life that is in Christ by the Gospel.

3. But yet notwithstanding the meanness and inconsiderableness of my Parents, it pleased God to put it into their heart, to put me to School, to learn both to Read and Write; the which I also attained, according to the rate of other poor mens children, though to my shame I confess, I did soon loose that little I learnt, and that even almost utterly, and that long before the Lord did work his gracious work of conversion upon my Soul.

4. As for my own natural life, for the time that I was without God in the world, it was, indeed, according to the course of this world, and the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: it was my delight to be taken captive by the Devil *at his will*, being filled with all unrighteousness; the which did also so strongly work, and put forth it self, both in my heart and life, and that from a childe, that I had but few Equals, (especially considering my years, which were tender, being few) both for cursing, (wearing, lying and blaspheming the holy Name of God.

5. Yea, so settled and rooted was I in these things, that they became as a second Nature to me; the which, as I also have with soberness considered since, did so offend the Lord, that even in my childhood he did scare and affright me with fearful dreams, and did terrifie me with dreadful visions. For often, after I had spent this and the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of Devils, and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, laboured to draw me away with them

of which I could never be rid. Also I should at these years be greatly afflicted and troubled with the thoughts of the day of Judgement, and that both night and day, and should tremble at the thoughts of the fearful torments of Hell-fire; still fearing that it would be my lot to be found at last amongst those Devils and Hellish Fiends, who are there bound down with the chains and bonds of eternal darkness.

6. These things, I say, when I was but a childe, did so distress my Soul, that when in the midst of my many sports and childish vanities, amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down and afflicted in my mind therewith; yet could I not let go my sins: yea, I was so overcome with despair of life and heaven, that then I should often wish, either that there had been no Hell, or that I had been a Devil; supposing they were onely tormentors; that if it must needs be, that I indeed went thither, I might be rather a tormentor, then tormented my self.

7. A while after, these terrible dreams did leave me, which also I soon forgot; for my pleasures did quickly cut off the remembrance of them, as if they had never been: wherefore with more greediness, according to the strength of Nature, I did still let loose the reins to my lusts, and delighted in all transgression against the Law of God: so that until I came to the state of marriage, I was the very ring-leader of all the Youth that kept me company, in to all manner of vice and ungodliness.

8. Yea, such prevalency had the lusts and fruits of the flesh, in this poor Soul of mine, that had not a miracle of precious grace prevented, I had not onely perished by the stroke of eternal Justice, but had also laid my self open even to the stroke of those laws, which bring some to disgrace and open shame

shame before the face of the world.

9. In these days the thoughts of Religion were very grievous to me; I could neither endure it myself, nor that any other should: so that when I have but seen some read in those books that concerned Christian piety, it would be as it were a prison to me. Then I said unto God, Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways, Job 21. 14, 15. I was now void of all good consideration; Heaven and Hell were both out of sight and minde; and as for Saving and Damning, they were least in my thoughts. O Lord, thou knowest my life, and my ways were not hid from thee.

10. Yet this I well remember, that though I could my self sin with greatest delight and ease, and also take pleasure in the vileness of my companions; yet even then, if I have at any time seen wicked things by those that professed goodness, it would make my spirit tremble. As once above all the rest, when I was in my height of vanity, yet hearing one to swear that was reckoned for a religious man, it had so great a stroke upon my spirit, as it made my heart to ake.

11. Presently after this, I changed my condition into a married state; and my mercy was, to light upon a Wife whose Father was counted godly: this Woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be, (not having so much as a Dish or Spoon betwixt us both) yet this she had for her part, *The Plain Mans Path-way to Heaven*, and *The Practice of Piety*, which her Father had left her when he died. In these two Books, I should sometimes read with her, wherein I also found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me: (but all this while I met with no conviction.) She also would be often telling of me what a godly man her Father was, and how he would reprove and cor-

rest Vice, both in his house and amongst his neighbours ; what a strict and holy life he lived in his day, both in word and deed.

12. Wherefore these books, with this relation, though they did not reach my heart to awaken it about my sad and sinful state, yet they did beget within me some desires to Religion: so that, because I knew no better, I fell in very eagerly with the Religion of the times, to wit, to go to Church twice a day, and that too with the foremost, and there should very devoutly both say and sing as others did; yet retaining my wicked life: but withal, I was so over-run with a spirit of superstition, that I adored, and that with great devotion, even all things (both the High-place, Priest, Clerk, Vestments, Service, and what else) belonging to the Church; counting all things holy that were therein contained; and especially the Priest and Clerk most happy, and without doubt greatly blessed, because they were the Servants, as I then thought, of God, and were principal in the holy Temple, to do his work therein.

13. This conceit grew so strong in little time upon my spirit, that had I but seen a Priest, (though never so sordid and debauched in his life) I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence him, and knit unto him; yea, I thought for the love I did bear unto them, (supposing they were the Ministers of my God) I could have layn down at their feet, and have been trampled upon by them; their Name, their Garb, and Work, did so intoxicate and bewitch me.

14. After I had been thus for some considerable time, another thought came into my mind, and that was, Whether we were of the Israelites or no: for finding in the Scriptures that they were once the peculiar People of God; thought I, if I were one
of

of this race, my Soul must needs be happy. Now again, I found within me a great longing to be resolved about this question, but could not tell how I should : at last, I asked my father of it, who told me, *No, we were not* : wherefore then I fell in my spirit, as to the hopes of that, and so remained.

15. But all this while I was not sensible of the danger and evil of sin ; I was kept from considering that sin would damn me, what Religion soever I followed, unless I was found in Christ : nay, I never thought of him, nor whether there was one or no. Thus man, while blind, doth wander, but wearieth himself with vanity : for he knoweth not the way to the City of God, *Eccles. 10. 15.*

16. But one day (amongst all the Sermons our Parson made) his subject was to treat of the Sabbath day, and of the evil of breaking that, either with labour, sports, or otherwise : (now I was one that took much delight in all manner of vice, and especially that was the Day that I did solace myself therewith) Wherefore I fell in my conscience under his Sermon, thinking and believing that he made that Sermon on purpose to shew me my evil-doing ; and at that time I felt what guilt was, though never before, that I can remember ; but then I was for the present greatly laden therewith, and so went home when the Sermon was ended, with a great burden on my spirit.

17. This for that instant did cut the sinews of my delights, and did imbitter my former pleasures to me : but behold, it lasted not ; for before I had well dined, the trouble began to go off my minde, and my heart returned to its old course : but Oh how glad was I, that this trouble was gone from me, and that the fire was put out ! Wherefore when I had sat stied nature with my foot, I shook the Sermon out my mind, and to my old custome

of sports and gaming I returned with great delight.

18. But the same day, as I was in the midst of a game at Cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole; just as I was about to strike it the second time, a voice did suddenly dart from Heaven into my Soul, which said, *Wilt thou leave thy sins, and go to Heaven? or have thy sins, and go to Hell?* At this I was put to an exceeding maze; wherefore leaving my Cat upon the ground, I looked up to Heaven, and was as if I had with the eyes of my understanding, seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if he did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for these, and other my ungodly practices.

19. I had no sooner thus conceived in my mind, but suddenly this conclusion was fastned on my spirit, (for the former hint did set my sins again before my face) *That I had been a great and grievous Sinner, and that it was now too too late for me to look after Heaven, for Christ would not forgive me, nor pardon my transgressions.* Then I fell to musing upon this also; and while I was thinking on it, and fearing lest it should be so, I felt my heart sink in despair, concluding it was too late; and therefore I resolved in my mind, I would go on in sin: for I thought I, if the case be thus, my state is surely miserable; miserable, if I leave my sins; and but miserable, if I follow them: I can but be damned; and if it must be so, I had as good be damned for many sins, as to be damned for few.

20. Thus I stood in the midst of my play, before all that then were present; but yet I told them nothing: but, I say, I having made this conclusion, I returned to my sport again; and I well remember, that presently this kind of despair did so poss-

less my Soul, that I was perswaded I could never attain to other comfort then what I should get in sin; for Heaven was gone already, so that on that I must not think: wherefore I found within me a great desire to take my fill of sin, still studying what sin was yet to be committed, that I might taste the sweetness of it; and I made as much haste as I could to fill my belly with its delicacies, lest I should die before I had my desire; for that I feared greatly. In these things, I protest before God, I lye not, neither do I feign this form of speech: these were really, strongly, and with all my heart, my desires; *the good Lord, whose mercy is unsearchable, forgive me my transgressions.*

21. (And I am very confident that this temptation of the Devil is more usual amongst poor creatures then many are aware of, even to over-run their spirits with a scurvie and seared frame of heart, and benumbing of conscience: which frame, he still and slyly supplyeth with such despair, that though not much guilt attendeth the Soul, yet they continually have a secret conclusion within them, that there is no hopes for them; *for they have loved sin* Jer. 2.25. & 18.13.)

22. Now therefore I went on in sin with great greediness of mind, still grudging that I could not be so satisfied with it as I would: this did continue with me about a moneth, or more. But one day as I was standing at a Neighbours Shop-window and there cursing and swearing, and playing the Mad-man after my wonted manner, there sat within the woman of the house, and heard me who though she also was a very loose and ungodly Wretch, yet protested that I swore and cursed at that most fearful rate, that she was made to tremble to hear me: And told me further, *That I was the ungodliest Fellow for swearing that ever she heard in*

her life; and that I by thus doing, was able to spoile all the Town in a whole Town, if they came but in my company.

23. At this reproof I was silenced, and put to secret shame; and that too, as I thought, before the God of Heavens wherefore while I there stood, and hanging down my head, I wished with all my heart that I might be a little childe again, that my Father might learn me to speak without this wicked way of swearing: for thought I, I am so accustomed to it, that it is but in vain for me to think of a reformation, for I thought it could never be.

24. But how it came to pass I know not, I did from this time forward so leave my swearing, that it was a great wonder to my self to observe it; and whereas before I knew not how to speak unless I put an Oath before, and another behind, to make my words have authority, now I could speak better, and with more pleasantness then ever I could before: all this while I knew not Jesus Christ, neither did I leave my sports and play.

25. But quickly after this, I fell in company with one poor man, that made profession of Religion; who, as I then thought, did talk pleasantly of the Scriptures, and of the matters of Religion: wherefore falling into some love and liking to what he said, I betook me to my Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading, but especially with the historical part thereof: for as for Pauls Epistles, and Scriptures of that nature, I could not away with them, being as yet but ignorant either of the corruptions of my nature, or of the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save me.

26. Wherefore I fell to some outward Reformation, both in my words and life, and did set the Commandments before me for my way to Heaven; which Commandments I also did strive to keep; and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well some-

times, and then I should have comfort; yet now and then should break one, and so afflict my Conscience; but then I should repent, and say I was sorry for it, and promise God to do better next time, and there get help again.

27. Thus I continued about a year, all which time our Neighbours did take me to be a very godly man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to see such a great and famous alteration in my life and manners; and indeed so it was, though yet I knew not Christ, nor Grace, nor Faith, nor Hope; and truly as I have well seen since, had I then died, my state had been most fearful: well, this I say, continued about a twelve-month, or more.

28. But upon a day, the good Providence of God did cast me to Bedford, to work on my calling; and in one of the streets of that town, I came where there was three or four poor women sitting at a door in the Sun, and talking about the things of God; and being now willing to hear them discourse, I drew near to hear what they said; for I was now a brisk talker also my self in the matters of Religion: but now I may say, I heard, but I understood not, for they were far above out of my reach, for their talk was about a new birth, the work of God on their hearts, also how they were convinced of their miserable state by nature: they talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted, and supported against the temptations of the Devil; moreover, they reasoned of the suggestions and temptations of Satan in particular, and told to each other by which they had been afflicted, and how they were born up under his assaults: they also discoursed of their own wretchedness of heart, of their unbelief, and did contemn, slight and abhor their own righteousness.

righteousness, as filthy, and insufficient to do them any good.

29. And me thought they spake as if joy did make them speak: they spake with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me as if they had found a new world, as if they were people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned amongst their Neighbours.

30. At this I felt my own heart began to shake, as mistrusting my condition to be naught; for I saw that in all my thoughts about Religion and Salvation, the New birth did never enter into my mind, neither knew I the comfort of the Word and Promise, nor the deceitfulness and treachery of my own wicked heart. As for secret thoughts, I took no notice of them; neither did I understand what Satans temptations were, nor how they were to be withstood and resisted, &c.

31. Thus therefore when I had heard and considered what they said, I left them, and went about my employment again: but their talk and discourse went with me, also my heart would tarry with them, for I was greatly affected with their words, both because by them I was convinced that I wanted the true tokens of a truly godly man, and also because by them I was convinced of the happy and blessed condition of him that was such a one.

32. Therefore I should often make it my business to be going again and again into the company of these poor people; for I could not stay away; and the more I went amongst them, the more I did question my condition; and, as still I do remember, presently I found two things within me, at which I did sometimes marvel, (especially considering what a blind, ignorant, foolish and ungodly Wretch but just before I was) the one was, a very

great softness and tenderness of heart, which caused me to fall under the conviction of what by Scripture they asserted; and the other was, a great bending in my mind to a continual meditating on them, and on all other good things which at any time I heard or read of.

33. My mind was now so turned, that it lay like a Horseleach at the vein, still crying out, *Give, give;* yea, it was so fixed on Eternity, and on the things about the Kingdome of Heaven, that is, so far as I knew, though as yet God knows, I knew but little, that neither pleasures, nor profits, nor perswasions, nor threats, could loosen it, or make it let go its hold; and, though I may speak it with shame, yet it is in very deed a certain truth, it would then have been as difficult for me to have taken my mind from heaven to earth, as I have found it often since to get it again from earth to heaven.

34. And now me thought I began to look into the Bible with new eyes, and read as I never did before; and especially the Epistles of the Apostle Paul were sweet and pleasant to me: and indeed I was then never out of the Bible, either by reading or meditation, still crying out to God, that I might know the truth, and way to heaven and glory.

35. And as I went on and read, I lighted on that passage, *To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, and to another Faith, &c.* 1 Cor. 12. And though, as I have since seen, that by this Scripture the holy Ghost intends, in special, things extraordinary, yet on me it then did fasten with conviction, that I did want things ordinary, even that understanding and wisdom that other Christians had. On this word I mused, and could not tell what to do, for I feared it shut me out of all the blessings that other good people had given them of God: but I was

loath

loath to conclude I had no Faith in my soul : for if I do so, thought I, then I shall count my self a very Cast-away indeed.

36. No, said I with my self, though I am convinced that I am an ignorant Sor, and that I want those blessed gifts of knowledge and understanding that other good people have, yet at a venture I will conclude I am not altogether faithless, though I know not what Faith is. For it was shewed me, and that too (as I have since seen) by Satan, That those who conclude themselves in a faithless state, have neither rest nor quiet in their Souls; and I was loath to fall quite into despair.

37. Wherefore by this suggestion, I was for a while made afraid to see my want of Faith; but God would not suffer me thus to undo and destroy my Soul, but did continually against this my blinde and sad conclusion, create still within me such suppositions, That I might in this deceive my self; that I could not rest content until I did now come to some certain knowledge whether I had Faith or no; this always running in my minde, *But how if you want Faith indeed? but how can you tell you have Faith?*

38. So that though I endeavoured at the first to look over the business of Faith, yet in a little time, I better considering the matter, was willing to put my self upon the tryal, whether I had Faith or no. But alas, poor Wretch! so ignorant and brutish was I, that I knew to this day no more how to do it, than I know how to begin and accomplish that rare and curious piece of Art, which I never yet saw nor considered.

39. Wherefore while I was thus considering, and being put to my plunge about it (for you must know that as yet I had in this matter broken my mind to no man, onely did hear and consider) the

Tempter came in with this delusion, That there was no way for me to know I had Faith, but by trying to work some miracle, urging those *Scriptures* that seem to look that way, for the inforcing and strengthening his Temptation. Nay, one day as I was betwixt *Elstow* and *Bedford*, the temptation was hot upon me to try if I had Faith by doing of some miracle; which miracle at that time was this, I must say to the puddles that were in the horse pads, *Be dry*; and to the dry places, *Be you the puddles*: and truly one time I was a going to say so indeed; but just as I was about to speak, this thought came into my minde, *But go under yonder Hedge, and pray first, that God would make you able*: but when I had concluded to pray, this came hot upon me, That if I prayed and came again and tried to do it, and yet did nothing notwithstanding, then before I had no Faith, but was a Cast-away, and lost: Nay, thought I, if it be so, I will never try yet, but will stay a little longer.

40. So I continued at a great loss: for I thought if they onely had Faith which could do such wonderful things, then I concluded that for the present I neither had it, nor yet for time to come were ever like to have it. Thus I was tossed betwixt the Devil and my own ignorance, and so perplexed, especially at some times, that I could not tell what to doe.

41. About this time, the state and happiness of these poor people at *Bedford* was thus in a Dream or Vision represented to me: I saw as if they were set on the Sunny side of some high Mountain, there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the Sun, while I was shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow, and dark clouds; methought also betwixt me and them I saw a wall that did compass about this Mountain; now tho-

row this wall, my Soul did greatly desire to pass, concluding that if I could, I would goe even into the very midst of them, and there also comfort my self with the heat of their Sun.

42. About this wall I thought my self to goe again and again, still prying as I went, to see if I could find some way or passage by which I might enter therein, but none could I find for some time: at the last I saw as it were a narrow gap, like a little door-way in the wall, thorow which I attempted to pass: but the passage being very straight, and narrow, I made many offers to get in, but all in vain, even untill I was well nigh quire beat out by striving to get in: at last with great striving, me thought I at first did get in my head, & after that by a side-ling striving, my shoulders, and my whole body; then was I exceeding glad, and went and sat down in the midst of them, and so was comforted with the light and heat of their Sun.

43. Now this Mountain and Wall, &c. was thus made out to me; the Mountain signified the Church of the living God; the Sun that shone thereon, the comfortable shining of his mercifull face on them that were therein: the wall I thought was the Word that did make separation between the Christians and the world: and the gap which was in this wall, I thought was Jesus Christ, who is the way to God the Father. But for as much as the passage was wonderful narrow, even so narrow, that I could not but with great difficulty, enter in therein; it shewed me, that none could enter into life but those that were in down-right earnest, and unless also they left this wicked world behind them; for here was only roome for Body and Soul, but not for Body and Soul, and Sin.

44. This resemblance abode upon my spirit many

my dayes, all which time I saw my self in a forlorn and sad condition, but yet was provoked to a vehement hunger, and desire to be one of that number that did sit in this Sun-shine: now also I should pray where ever I was, whether at home or abroad, in house or field, and should also often with lifting up of heart, sing that of the fifty first Psalm, *O Lord, consider my distress: for as yet I knew not where I was.*

45. Neither as yet could I attain to any comfortable perswasion that I had Faith in Christ, but instead of having satisfaction, here I began to find my Soul to be assaulted with fresh doubts about my future happiness, especially with such as these, *Whether I was elected; but how if the day of grace should now be past and gone?*

46. By these two temptations I was very much afflicted and disquieted; sometimes by one, and sometimes by the other of them. And first, to speak of that about my questioning my election, I found at this time that though I was in a flame to find the way to Heaven and Glory, and though nothing could beat me off from this, yet this question did so offend and discourage me, that I was, especially at sometimes, as if the very strength of my body also had been taken away by the force and power thereof. This Scripture also did seem to me to trample upon all my desires, *It is neither in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy, Rom 9.*

47. With this Scripture I could not tell what to do for I evidently saw that unless the great God of his infinite grace and bounty, had voluntarily chosen me to be a vessel of mercy, though I should desire and long, and labour untill my heart did break, no good could come of it. Therefore this would still stick with me, How can you tell you are elected

lected? and what if you should not? how then?

48. O Lord, thought I, what if I should not indeed? it may be you are not, said the Tempter: it may be so indeed, thought I. Why then, said Satan, you had as good leave off, and strive no further; for if indeed you should not be Elected and chosen of God, there is no talke of your being saved: For it is neither in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy.

49. By these things I was driven to my wits end, not knowing what to say, or how to answer these temptations, (indeed I little thought that Satan had thus assaulted me, but that rather it was my own prudence thus to start the question) for that the Elect only attained eternal life, that I without scruple did heartily close withall; but that my self was one of them, there lay all the question.

50. Thus therefore for several dayes I was greatly assaulted and perplexed, and was often, when I have been walking, ready to sink where I went with faintness in my mind: but one day, after I had been so many weeks oppressed and cast down therewith, as I was now quite giving up the Ghost of all my hopes of ever attaining life, that sentence fell with weight upon my spirit, Look at the generations of old, and see, did ever any trust in God and were confounded?

51. At which I was greatly lightened, and encouraged in my Soul; for thus at that very instant it was expounded to me: Begin at the beginning of Genesis, and read to the end of the Revelations, and see if you can find that there was any that ever trusted in the Lord, and was Confounded. So coming home, I presently went to my Bible to see if I could find that saying, not doubting but to find it presently, for it was so fresh, and with such strength and com-
-fort

fort on my spirit, that I was as if it talked with me.

52. Well, I looked, but I found it not, only it abode upon me : then I did aske first this good man, and then another, if they knew where it was ; but they knew no such place ; at this I wondered that such a sentence should so suddenly and with such comfort, and strength seize and abide upon my heart, and yet that none could find it, (for I doubted not but it was in holy Scripture.)

53. Thus I continued above a year, and could not find the place, but at last, casting my eye into the Apocrypha-Books, I found it in *Ecclesiasticus* ; this at the first did somewhat daunt me, but because by this time I had got more experience of the love and kindness of God, it troubled me the less ; especially when I considered, that though it was not in those Texts that we call holy and Canonical, yet for as much as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it, and I bless God for that word, for it was of God to me : that word doth still at times shine before my face.

54. After this, that other doubt did come with strength upon me, *But how if the day of grace should be past and gone ?* how if you have over-stood the time of mercy ? Now I remember that one day as I was walking into the Country, I was much in the thoughts of this, *But how if the day of grace be past ?* and to aggravate my trouble, the Tempter presented to my mind those good people of *Bedford*, and suggested thus unto me, That these being converted already, they were all that God would save in those parts, & that I came too late, for these had got the blessing before I came.

55. Now was I in great distress, thinking in very deed that this might well be so : wherefore I went
up

up and down bemoaning my sad condition, counting my self far worse then a thousand fools, for standing off thus long, and spending so many years in sin as I have done; still crying out ! Oh that I had turned sooner ! Oh that I had turned seven years agoe ; it made me also angry with my self, to think that I should have no more wit but to trifle away my time till my Soul and Heaven were lost.

56. But when I had been long vexed with this fear, and was scarce able to take one step more, just about the same place where I received my other encouragement, these words broke in upon my mind, *Compell them to come in, that my house may be filled, and yet there is roome*, Luke 14.22,23. These words, but especially them, *And yet there is roome*, were sweet words to me ; for truly I thought that by them I saw that there was place enough in Heaven for me, and moreover, that when the Lord Jesus did speak these words, he then did think of me, and that he knowing the time would come that I should be afflicted with fear, that there was no place left for me in his bosome, did before speak this word, and leave it upon record, that I might find help thereby against this vile temptation.

57. In the light and encouragement of this word, I went a pretty while, and the comfort was the more, when I thought that the Lord Jesus should think on me so long agoe, and that he should speak them words on purpose for my sake, for I did then think verily that he did on purpose speak them to encourage me withall.

58. After this, I found by reading the word, that those that must be glorified with Christ in another world, *Must be called by him here*. Called to the partaking of a share in his word and righteousness, and to the comforts & first-fruits of his Spirit, and to a peculiar interest in all those Heavenly things, which

which do indeed fore-fit the Soul for that rest and house of glory which is in Heaven above.

59. Here again I was at a very great stand, not knowing what to doe, fearing I was not called; for thought I, if I be not called, what then can doe me good? But oh how I now loved those words that spake of a Christians calling! as when the Lord said to one, *Follow me*, and to another, *Come after me*, and oh thought I, that he would say so to me too! how gladly would I run after him.

60. I cannot now express with what longings and breakings in my Soul, I cryed to Christ to call me. Thus I continued for a time all on a flame to be converted to Jesus Christ, and did also see at that day such glory in a converted state, that I could not be contented without a share therein. Gold! could it have been gotten for Gold, what could I have given for it! had I had a whole world, it had all gone ten thousand times over, for this, that my Soul might have been in a converted state.

61. How lovely now was every one in my eyes, that I thought to be converted men and women? they shone, they walked like a people that carried the broad Seal of Heaven about them. Oh I saw the lot was fallen to them in pleasant places, and they had a goodly heritage. But that which made me sick, was that of Christ, in Mark, *He went up into a Mountain, and called to him whom he would, and they came unto him*, Mark 3.13.

62. This Scripture made me faint and fear, yet it kindled fire in my Soul. That which made me fear, was this, lest Christ should have no liking to me, for he called *whom he would*. But oh the glory that I saw in that condition, did still so engage my heart, that I could seldome read of any that Christ did call, but I presently wished, Would I had been in their cloaths, would I had been born Peter, would

would I had been born *John*, or would I had been by, and had heard him when he called them, how would I have cryed, O Lord, call me also! but oh I feared he would not call me.

63. And truly the Lord let me goe thus many months together, and shewed me nothing, either that I was already, or should be called hereafter. But at last, after much time spent, and many groans to God, that I might be made partaker of the holy and heavenly calling, that word came in upon me, *I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed, for the Lord dwelleth in Zion.* Joel 3.21. These words I thought were sent to encourage me to waite still upon God, and signified unto me, that if I were not already, yet time might come I might be in truth converted unto Christ.

64. About this time I began to break my mind to those poor people in *Gedford*, and to tell them my condition: which when they had heard, they told *Mr. Gifford* of me, who himself also took occasion to talke with me, and was willing to be perswaded of me, though I think but from little grounds; but he invited me to his house, where I should hear him confer with others about the dealings of God with the Soul: from all which I still received more conviction, and from that time began to see something of the vanity and inward wretchedness of my wicked heart, for as yet I knew no great matter therein, but now it began to be discovered unto me, and also to worke at that rate for wickedness as it never did before. Now I evidently found, that lusts and corruptions would strongly put forth themselves within me, in wicked thoughts and desires, which I did not regard before: my desires also for heaven and life began to fail; I found also, that whereas before my Soul was full of longings after God, now my heart began to hanker after every

every foolish vanity ; yea, my heart would not be moved to mind that that was good, it began to be careless both of my Soul and Heaven ; it would now continually hang back both to, and in every duty, and was as a clog on the leg of a Bird to hinder her from flying.

65. Nay, thought I, now I grow worse and worse, now am I further from conversion then ever I was before ; wherefore, I began to sink greatly in my Soul, and began to entertain such discouragement in my heart, as laid me as low as Hell. If now I should have burned at a stake, I could not believe that Christ had love for me. Alas, I could neither hear him, nor see him, nor feel him, nor savor any of his things : I was driven as with a Tempest, my heart would be unclean, the *Cananites* would dwell in the Land.

66. Sometimes I would tell my condition to the people of God ; which when they heard, they would pity me, and would tell me of the Promises ; but they had as good have told me that I must reach the Sun with my finger, as have bidden me receive or relie upon the Promise, and as soon I should have done it, all my sence and feeling was against me, and I saw I had a heart that would sin, and lay under a Law that would condemn.

67. (These things have often made me think of that Child which the Father brought to Christ, Who while he was yet a coming to him, was thrown down by the Devil, and also so rent and torn by him, that he lay and wallowed foaming :) Luke 9. 42. Mark 9. 20.

68. Further, in these dayes I should find my heart to shut it self up against the Lord, and against his holy Word, I have found my unbelief to set as it were the shoulder to the door to keep him out, and that too, even then when I have with many

bitter

bitter sigh cried, Good Lord break it open ; *Lord break these gates of brass, and cut these bars of iron asunder.* Yet that Word would sometime create in my heart a peaceable pause, I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.

69. But all this while, as to the act of sinning, I never was more tender then now ; I durst not take a pin or a stick, though but so big as a straw ; for, my conscience now was sore , and would smart at every touch : I could not now tell how to speak my words for fear I should mis-place them : O how gingerly did I then go, in all I did or said ! I found my self as on a miry bog, that shook if I did but stir, and as there left both of God, and Christ, and the Spirit ; and all good things.

70. And though I was thus troubled and tossed and afflicted with the sight and sence and terrour of my own wickedness, yet I was afraid to let this sence and sight go quite off my minde : for I found that unless guilt of Conscience was taken off the right way, that is, by the Blood of Christ, a man grew rather worse for the loss of his trouble of minde, than better. Wherefore if my guilt lay hard upon me, then I should cry that the Blood of Christ might take it off : and if it was going off without it (for the sence of sin would be sometimes as if it would die, and go quite away) then I would also strive to fetch it upon my heart again, by bringing the punishment for sin in Hell-fire upon my Spirit ; and should cry, *Lord, let it not go off my heart but the right way, but by the Blood of Christ, and by the application of thy mercy thorow him to my Soul ;* for that Scripture lay much upon me, *Without shedding of Blood there is no Remission,* Heb. 9. 22. And that which made me the more afraid of this, was, Because I had seen some, who though when they were under Wounds of Conscience, then they

would cry and pray, but they seeking rather present Ease from their Trouble, then Pardon for their Sin, cared not how they lost their guilt, they got it out of their minde; and therefore having got it off the wrong way, it was not sanctified unto them, but they grew harder and blinder, and more wicked after their trouble. This made me afraid, and made me cry to God, that it might not be so with me.

71. And now was I sorry that God had made me a man, for I feared I was a reprobate: I counted man, as unconverted, the most doleful of all the Creatures: Thus being afflicted and tossed about my sad condition, I counted my self alone, and above the most of men unblest. In this condition I went a great while, but when comforting time was come, I heard one preach a Sermon upon those words in the Song, (*Song.4.1.*) Behold thou art fair, my Love, behold thou art fair; but at that time he made these two words, My Love, his chief and subject matter; from which after he had a little opened the text, he observed these several conclusions: 1. That the Church, and so every saved Soul, is Christs Love, when loveless: 2. Christs Love without cause: 3. Christs Love, when hated of the world: 4. Christs Love when under temptation and under desertion: 5. Christs Love from first to last.

72. But I got nothing by what he said at present only when he came to the application of the fourth particular, this was the word he said, If it be so that the saved Soul is Christs Love, when under temptation and desertion; then poor tempted Soul, when thou art assaulted and afflicted with temptation, and the bidings of Gods Face, yet think on these two words, MY LOVE still.

73. So as I was a going home, these words came again into my thoughts, and I well remember the

they came in, I said thus in my heart, What shall I get by thinking on these two words? this thought had no sooner passed thorow my heart, but the words began thus to kindle in my Spirit, *Thou art my Love, thou art my Love*, twenty times together; and still as they ran thus in my minde, they waxed stronger and warmer, and began to make me look up; but being as yet between hope and fear, I still replied in my heart, *But is it true too? but is it true?* at which that sentence fell in upon me, *He wist not that it was true which was done unto him of the Angel*, Act. 12. 9.

74. Then I began to give place to the Word, which with power did over and over make this joyful sound within my Soul, *Thou art my Love, thou art my Love*, and nothing shall separate thee from my love; and with that Rom. 8. 39. came into my minde. Now was my heart filled full of comfort and hope, and now I could believe that my sins should be forgiven me; wherefore I said in my Soul with much gladness, Well, I would I had a pen and ink here, I would write this down before I go any further, for surely I will not forget this, forty years hence; but alas! within less then forty days I began to question all again.

75. Yet still at times, I was helped to believe that it was a true manifestation of Grace unto my Soul, though I had lost much of the life and savour of it. Now about a week or fortnight after this, I was much followed by this Scripture, *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you*, Luk. 22. 31. and sometimes it would sound so loud within me, yea, and as it were call so strongly after me, that once above all the rest, I turned my head over my shoulder, thinking verily that some man had behind me called to me, being at a great distance.

76. But so foolish was I, and ignorant, that I

knew not the reason of this sound, (which as I did both see and feel soon after, was sent from heaven as an alarm to awaken me to provide for what was coming) onely it would make me muse, and wonder in my minde to think what should be the reason that this Scripture, and that at this rate, so often and so loud, should still be sounding and rattling in mine ears. But, as I said before, I soon after perceived the end of God therein.

77. For about the space of a month after, a very great storm came down upon me, which handled me twenty times worse then all I had met with before: it came stealing upon me, now by one piece, then by another; first all my comfort was taken from me, then darkness seized upon me; after which, whole floods of Blasphemies, both against God, Christ, and the Scriptures, was poured upon my spirit, to my great confusion and astonishment. These blasphemous thoughts were such as also stirred up questions in me against the very being of God, and of his onely beloved Son; as whether there were in truth a God or Christ, or no? and whether the holy Scriptures were not rather a Fable and cunning Story, then the holy and pure Word of God?

78. The Tempter also would much assault me with this: How can you tell but that the Turks had as good Scriptures to prove their *Mahomet* the Saviour, as we have to prove our *Jesus* is; and could I think that so many ten thousands in so many Countreys and Kingdoms, should be without the knowledge of the right way to Heaven (if there were indeed a Heaven) and that we onely, who live but in a corner of the Earth, should alone be blest therewith? Every one doth think his own Religion rightest, both *Jews*, and *Moors*, and *Pagans*; and how if all our Faith, and Christ, and Scriptures, should be but a think-so too.

79. Sometime I have endeavoured to argue against these suggestions, and to set some of the Sentences of blessed *Paul* against them; but alas! I quickly felt when I thus did, such arguings as these would return again upon me; Though we made so great a matter of *Paul*, and of his words, yet how could I tell but that in very deed, he, being a subtle and cunning man, might give himself up to deceive with strong delusions, and also take both that pains and travel to undo and destroy his fellows.

80. These suggestions (with many other which at this time I may not, nor dare not utter, neither by word nor pen) did make such a seizure upon my spirit, and did so over-weigh my heart, both with their number, continuance, and fiery force, that I felt as if there were nothing else but these from morning to night within me, and as though indeed there could be room for nothing else; and also concluded, that God had in very wrath to my Soul given me up unto them, to be carried away with them, as with a mighty whirlwind.

81. Onely by the distaste that they gave unto my spirit, I felt there was something in me that refused to embrace them: but this consideration I then onely had, when God gave me leave to swallow my spittle, otherwise the noise, and strength, and force of these temptations would drown and overflow, and as it were bury all such thoughts, or the remembrance of any such thing. While I was in this temptation, I should find often my mind suddenly put upon it, to curse and swear, or to speak some grievous thing of God, or *Christ* his Son, and of the *Scriptures*.

82. Now I thought surely I am possessed of the Devil; at other times again I thought I should be bereft of my wits, for instead of lauding and magnifying of God the Lord with others, if I have but

heard him spoken of, presently some most horrible blasphemous thought or other would bolt out of my heart against him. So that whether I did think that God was, or again did think there were no such thing; no love, nor peace, nor gracious disposition could I feel within me.

83 These things did sink me into very deep despair, for I concluded that such things could not possibly be found amongst them that loved God. I often, when these temptations have been with force upon me, did compare my self in the case of such a Child whom some Gypsie hath by force took up under her apron, and is carrying from Friend and Country; kick sometimes I did, and also scream and cry; but yet I was as bound in the wings of the temptation, and the wind would carry me away. I thought also of *Saul*, and of the evil spirit that did possess him, and did greatly fear that my condition was the same with that of his.

84. In these days, when I have heard others talk of what was the sin against the Holy Ghost, then would the Tempter so provoke me to desire to sin that sin, that I was as if I could not, must not, neither should be quiet until I had committed that; now no sin would serve but that: if it were to be committed by speaking of such a word, then I have been as if my mouth would have spoken that word whether I would or no; and in so strong a measure was this temptation upon me, that often I have been ready to clap my hand under my chin, to hold my mouth from opening; and to that end also I have had thoughts at other times to leap with my head downward into some Muckhil-hole or other, to keep my mouth from speaking.

85. Now I blessed the condition of the Dogg and Toad, and counted the estate of every thing

that God had made, far better then this dreadful state of mine, and such as my companions was : yea, gladly would I have been in the condition of Dog or Horse, for I knew they had no Soul to perish under the everlasting weights of Hell for sin, as mine was like to do : Nay, and though I saw this, felt this, and was broken to pieces with it, yet that which added to my sorrow, was, that I could not finde that with all my Soul I did desire deliverance. That Scripture also did tear and rend my Soul in the midst of these distractions, *The wicked are like the troubled Sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt : There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God,* Isa. 57. 20, 21.

86. While this temptation lasted, which was about a year, I could attend upon none of the Ordinances of God, but with sore and great affliction ; yea, then was I most distressed with blasphemies : if I have been hearing the Word, then uncleanness, blasphemies, and despair, would hold me as Captive there ; if I have been reading, then sometimes I had sudden thoughts to question all I read ; sometimes again my mind would be so strangely snatched away, and possessed with other things, that I have neither known, nor regarded, nor remembered so much as the sentence that but now I have read.

87. In prayer also, I have been greatly troubled at this time : sometimes I have thought I should see the Devil, nay, thought I have felt him behind me pull my cloaths : he would be also continually at me in the time of prayer, to have done, break off, make haste, you have prayed enough, and stay no longer ; still drawing my minde away. Sometimes also he would cast in such wicked thoughts as these, that I must pray to him, or for him : I have thought sometimes of that, *Fall down, or, If thou wilt fall down and worship me.* C 4 88.

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88. Also when because I have had wandering thoughts in the time of this duty, I have laboured to compose my mind, and fix it upon God; then with great force hath the Tempter laboured to distract me and confound me, and to turn away my mind, by presenting to my heart and fancy the form of a Bush, a Bull, a Besom, or the like, as if I should pray to those, to these also he would at sometimes (especially) so hold my mind, that I was as if I could think of nothing else, or pray to nothing else but to these, or such as they.

89. Yet at times I should have some strong and heart-affecting apprehensions of God, and the reality of the truth of his Gospel: but oh how would my heart at such times put forth it self with unexpressable groanings! my whole Soul was then in every word, I should cry with pangs after God, that he would be merciful to me; but then I should be daunted again with such conceits as these, I should think that God did mock at these my prayers, saying, and that in the audience of the holy Angels, This poor simple Wretch doth hanker after me, as if I had nothing to do with my mercy, but to bestow it on such as he: alas poor fool! how art thou deceived, it is not for such as thee to have favour with the Highest.

90. Then hath the Tempter come upon me also with such discouragements as these; You are very hot for mercy, but I will cool you; this frame shall not last alwayes; many have been as hot as you for a spirt, but I have quenched their Zeal (and with this such and such who were fallen off, would be set before mine eyes) then I should be afraid that I should do so too: but, thought I, I am glad this comes into my minde; well, I will watch and take what heed I can: Though you do, said Satan, I shall be too hard for you, I will cool you insensibly,

by

by degrees, by little and little; what care I, saith he, though I be seven years in chilling your heart, if I can do it at last; continual rocking will lull a crying Child asleep: I will ply it close, but I will have my end accomplished: though you be burning hot at present, yet if I can pull you from this fire, I shall have you cold before it be long. These things brought me into great straights; for as I at present could not find my self fit for present death, so I thought to live long would make me yet more unfit; for time would make me forget all, and wear even the remembrance of the evil of sin, the worth of Heaven, and the need I had of the Blood of Christ to wash me, both out of mind and thought: But I thank Christ Jesus, these things did not at present make me slack my crying, but rather did put me more upon it (*like her who met with the Adulterer*, Deut. 22. 25.) in which dayes that was a good word to me, after I had suffered these things a while, *I am perswaded that neither death, nor life, &c. shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus*, Rom. 8. 38. And now I hoped long life should not destroy me, nor make me miss of Heaven.

91. Yet I had some supports in this temptation, though they were then all questioned by me: That in the third of *Jeremiah*, at the first, was something to me, and so was the consideration of the fifth verse of that Chapter, that though we have spoken and done evil things as we could, yet we should cry unto God, *My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth*, and should return unto him.

92. I had also once a sweet glance from that in 2 Cor. 5. 21. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* I remember also that one day, as I was sitting in a Neighbours House, and there very
sad

sad at the consideration of my many blasphemies; and as I was saying in my mind, What ground have I to think that I, who have been so vile and abominable, should ever inherit eternal life; that word came suddenly upon me, *What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. 8.31. that also was an help unto me, *Because I live, you shall live also,* Joh. 14. 19. But these were but hints, touches, and short visits, though very sweet when present, onely they lasted not; but like to *Peters Sheet*, of a sudden were caught up from me to Heaven again, Act. 10. 16.

93. But afterwards the Lord did more fully and graciously discover himself unto me, and indeed did quite not onely deliver me from the guilt that by these things was laid upon my Conscience, but also from the very filth thereof, for the temptation was removed, and I was put into my right mind again, as other Christians were.

94. I remember that one day as I was traveling into the Countrey, and musing on the wickedness and blasphemy of my heart, and considering of the enmity that was in me to God, that Scripture came in my mind, *He hath made peace by the blood of his Cross,* Col. 1. 20. by which I was made to see both again, and again, and again, that day, that God and my Soul were friends by this blood; yea, I saw that the justice of God and my sinful Soul, could embrace and kiss each other through this blood: this was a good day to me, I hope I shall not forget it.

95. At another time, as I was set by the fire in my house, and musing on my wretchedness, the Lord made that also a precious word unto me, *For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same,* that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil: and deliver those

those who through the fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage; Heb. 2. 14, 15. I thought that the glory of these words was then so weighty on me, that I was both once and twice ready to swoon as I sat, yet not with grief and trouble, but with solid joy and peace.

96. At this time also I sat under the Ministry of holy Mr. Gifford, whose Doctrine, by Gods grace, was much for my stability. This man made it much his business to deliver the People of God from all those false and unsound rests that by Nature we are prone to take and make to our Souls; he pressed us to take special heed, that we took not up any truth upon trust, as from this or that or another man or men, but to cry mightily to God, that he would convince us of the reality thereof, and set us down therein by his own Spirit in the holy Word; for, said he, if you do otherwise, when temptations come, if strongly, you not having received them with evidence from Heaven, will find you want that help and strength now to resist, as once you thought you had.

97. This was as seasonable to my Soul, as the former and latter rain in their season; for I had found, and that by sad experience, the truth of these his words. (For I had felt, *no man can say, especially when tempted of the Devil, that Jesus Christ is Lord, but by the holy Ghost.*) Wherefore I found my Soul thorow Grace very apt to drink in this Doctrine, and to incline to pray to God that in nothing that pertained to Gods glory and my own eternal happiness, he would suffer me to be without the confirmation thereof from Heaven; for now I saw clearly there was an exceeding difference betwixt the notions of flesh and blood, and the Revelations of God in Heaven, also a great difference between that faith that is fained, and according

according to mans wisdom, and of that which comes by a man being born thereto of God, *Mat. 16. 15, 16. 1 John 5. 1.*

98. But oh! now, how was my Soul led from truth to truth by God! even from the birth and Cradle of the Son of God, to his ascension and second coming from Heaven to judge the World.

99. Truly I then found upon this account the great God was very Good unto me, for to my remembrance there was not any thing that then I cried to God to make known and reveal unto me, but he was pleased to do it for me, I mean not one part of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, but I was orderly led into it; me thought I saw with great evidence, from the relation of the four Evangelists, the wonderful work of God in giving Jesus Christ to save us, from his conception and birth, even to his second coming to judgement: me thought I was as if I had seen him born, as if I had seen him grow up, as if I had seen him walk thorow this world, from the Cradle to his Cross, to which also when he came, I saw how gently he gave himself to be hanged and nailed on it for my sins and wicked doings; also as I was musing on this his progress, that dropped on my Spirit, *He was ordained for the slaughter, 1 Pet. 1. 19, 20.*

100. When I have considered also the truth of his resurrection, and have remembered that word, *touch me not Mary, &c.* I have seen, as if he leaped at the Graves mouth, for joy that he was risen again, and had got the conquest over our dreadful foes, *John 20. 17.* I have also in the Spirit seen him a man on the right hand of God the Father for me, and have seen the manner of his coming from Heaven to judge the world with glory, and have been confirmed in these things by these Scriptures following, *Acts 1. 9, 10. Acts 7.*

56. *Act. 10. 42. Heb. 7. 24. Heb. 8. 38. Rev. 1. 18. 1 Thes. 4. 17, 18.* Once I was much troubled to know whether the Lord Jesus was both Man as well as God, and God as well as Man; and truly in those dayes, let men say what they would, unless I had it with evidence from Heaven, all was as nothing to me, I counted not my self set down in any truth of God; well, I was much troubled about this point, and could not tell how to be resolved: at last, that in the fift of the Revelations came into my mind, And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the Throne, and of the four Beasts, and in the midst of the Elders stood a Lamb; in the midst of the Throne, there is his God-head, in the midst of the Elders, there is his man hood; but O me thought this did glister, it was a goodly touch and gave me sweet satisfaction; that other Scripture also did help me much in this, *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, &c. Isa. 9. 6.*

101. Also besides these teachings of God in his Word, the Lord made use of two things to confirm me in these things, the one was the errors of the *Quakers*, and the other was the guilt of sin; for as the *Quakers* did oppose his Truth, so God did the more confirm me in it, by leading me in to the Scriptures that did wonderfully maintain it; and as I said, the guilt of sin did help me much, for still as that would come upon me, the blood of Christ did take it off again, and again, and again, and that too, sweetly, according to the Scriptures; O Friends, cry to God to reveal Jesus Christ unto you, there is none teacheth like him.

102. It would be too long for me here to stay, to tell you in particular how God did set me down

down in all the things of Christ, and how he did, that he might so do, lead me into his words, yea and also how he did open them unto me, make them shine before me, and cause them to dwell with me, talk with me, and comfort me over and over, both of his own being, and the being of his Son, and Spirit, and Word, and Gospel.

103. Onely this, as I said before, I will say unto you again, that in general he was pleased to take this course with me, first to suffer me to be afflicted with temptation concerning them, and then reveal them to me; as sometimes I should lie under great guilt for sin, even crushed to the ground therewith, and then the Lord would shew me the death of Christ, yea and so sprinkle my Conscience with his Blood, that I should find, and that before I was aware, that in that Conscience, where but just now did reign and rage the Law, even there would rest and abide the Peace and Love of God thorow Christ.

104. Now had I an evidence for Heaven with many golden Seals thereon, all hanging in my sight; now could I remember this manifestation, and the other discovery of grace with comfort; and should often long and desire that the last day were come, that I might for ever be inflamed with the sight, and joy, and communion of him, whose Head was crowned with Thorns, whose Face was spit on, and Body broken, and Soul made an offering for my sins: for whereas before I lay continually trembling at the mouth of Hell; now me thought I was got so far therefrom, that I could not, when I looked back, scarce discern it, and O thought I, that I were fourscore years old now, that I might die quickly, that my soul might be gone to rest.

105. But after the Lord had in this manner thus graciously delivered me from this great and sore temptation

temptation, and had set me down so sweetly in the Faith of his holy gospel, and had given me such strong consolation and blessed evidence from heaven touching my interest in his love through Christ; the Tempter came upon me again, and that with a more grievous and dreadful temptation then before.

106. And that was to sell and part with this most blessed Christ, to exchange him for the things of this life; for any thing: the temptation lay upon me for the space of a year, and did follow me so continually, that I was not rid of it one day in a month, no not sometimes one hour in many dayes together, unless I was asleep.

107. And though, in my judgement, I was persuaded, that those who were once effectually in Christ (as I hoped, through his grace, I had seen my self) could never lose him for ever (*For the land shall not be sold for ever, for the Land is mine, saith God, Levit. 25. 23.*) yet it was a continual vexation to me, to think that I should have so much as one such thought within me against a Christ, a Jesus, that had done for me as he had done.

108. But it was neither my dislike of the thought, nor yet any desire and endeavour to resist it, that in the least did shake or abate the continuation or force and strength thereof; for it did alwayes in almost wharever I thought, intermix it self therewith, in such sort that I could neither eat my food, stoop for a pin, chop a stick, or cast mine eye to look on this or that, but still the temptation would come, *Sell Christ for this, or sell Christ for that.*

109. Sometimes it would run in my thoughts not so little as a hundred times together, *Sell him, sell him, sell him*; against which, I may say, for whole hours together I have been forced to stand

as continually leaning and forcing my Spirit against it, lest haply before I were aware, some wicked thought might arise in my heart that might consent thereto; and sometimes also the Tempter would make me believe I had consented to it, then should I be as tortured on a Rack for whole dayes together.

110. This temptation did put me to such scares lest I should at some times, I say, consent thereto, and be overcome therewith, that by the very force of my mind in labouring to gainsay and resist this wickedness; my very Body also would be put into action or motion, by way of pushing or thrusting; still answering, as fast as the destroyer said *sell him*, I will nor, I will not; I will nor, I will nor, no not for thousands, thousands, thousands of worlds; thus reckoning lest I should in the midst of these assaults set too low a value on him, even until I scarce well knew where I was, or how to be composed again.

111. But to be brief, one morning as I did lie in my Bed, I was, as at other times, most fiercely assaulted with this temptation, to *sell and part with Christ*; the wicked suggestion still running in my mind, *sell him, sell him, sell him, sell him*, as fast as a man could speak; against which also in my mind, as at other times I answered, No, no, no for thousands, thousands, thousands, at least twenty times together; but at last, after much striving, even until I was almost out of breath, I felt the thought pass through my heart, *Let him go if he will*, and I thought also that I felt my heart consent thereto.

112. Now was the battel won, and down fell I, as a Bird that is shot from the top of a Tree, into great guilt and fearful despair; thus getting out of my Bed, I went moping into the field

but God knows with as heavy a heart as mortal man, I think, could bear; where for the space of two hours, I was like a man bereft of life, and as now past all recovery, and bound over to eternal punishment.

113. And withal, that Scripture did seize upon my Soul, Or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his Birth-right; for you know how that afterwards when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, Heb. 12. 16, 17.

114. These words were to my Soul like Fetters of Brass to my Legs, in the continual sound of which I went for several months together. But about ten or eleven a Clock one day, as I was walking under a Hedge, full of sorrow and guilt God knows, and bemoaning my self for this hard hap, that such a thought should arise within me, suddenly this sentence bolted in upon me, *The Blood of Christ remits all guilt*; at this I made a stand in my Spirit: with that, this word took hold upon me, *The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin*: now I began to conceive peace in my Soul, and methought I saw as if the Tempter did hear and steal away from me, as being ashamed of what he had done. At the same time also I had my sin and the Blood of Christ thus represented to me, That my sin when compared to the Blood of Christ, was no more to it, than this little clot or stone before me, is to this vast and wide field that here I see: This gave me good encouragement for the space of two or three hours, in which time also me thought I saw by faith the Son of God as suffering for my sins. But because it tarried not, I therefore sunk in my spirit under exceeding guilt again.

115. Sometimes also I should have a touch from that in Luk. 22. 31. *I have prayed for thee, that thy*

Faith fail not ; but it would not abide upon me : neither could I indeed, when I consider'd my state, find ground to conceive in the least, that there should be the root of that Grace within me, having sinned as I had done. Now was I tore and rent in heavy case, for many days together.

116. Then began I with sad and careful heart, to consider of the nature and largeness of my sin, and to search in the word of God, if I could in any place espy a word of Promise, or any encouraging Sentence by which I might take relief. Wherefore I began to consider that third of *Mark*, *All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, wherewith soever they shall blaspheme* : Which place me thought, at a blush, did contain a large and glorious Promise for the pardon of high offences ; but considering the place more fully, I thought it was rather to be understood, as relating more chiefly to those who had, while in a natural estate, committed such things as there are mentioned, but not to me, who had not onely received light and mercie, but that had both after and also contrary to that, so slighted Christ as I had done.

117. I feared therefore that this wicked sin of mine might be that sin unpardonable, of which he there thus speaketh, *But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation* : And I did the rather give credit to this, because of that sentence in the *Hebrews*, *For you know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected ; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears*.

118. And now began I to labour to call again time that was past, wishing a thousand times twice told, that the day was yet to come, when I should be tempted to such a sin ; concluding with great indig-

indignation, both against my heart and all assaults, how I would rather have been torn in pieces, than found a consentor thereto: but alas! these thoughts and wishings, and resolvings, were now too late to help me; the thought had passed my heart, God hath let me go, and I am fallen: O, thought I, that it was with me as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me! Job 29.2.

119. Then again, being loth and unwilling to perish, I began to compare my sin with others, to see if I could find that any of those that are saved had done as I had done. So I considered David's Adultery and Murder, and found them most hainous crimes, and those too committed after light and grace received: but yet by considering, I perceived that his transgressions were onely such as were against the Law of Moses, from which the Lord Christ could with the consent of his Word deliver him: but mine was against the Gospel, yea, against the Mediator thereof.

120. Now again should I be as if racked upon the Wheel; when I considered, that, besides the guilt that possessed me, I should be so void of grace, so bewitched: What, thought I, must it be no sin but this? must it needs be the great transgression? Psal. 19. 13. must that wicked one touch my Soul, 1 Job. 5. 18. O what stings did I find in all these Sentences!

121. After this, I came to consider of Peters sin which he committed in denying his Master; and indeed this came nighest to mine, of any that I could find; for he had denied his Saviour as I, and that after Light and Mercy received; yea, and that too, after warning given him: I also considered that he did it both once and twice, and that after time to consider betwixt. But though I put all these circumstances together, that if possible I might find

help, yet I considered again, that his was but a denial of his Master, but mine was a selling of my Saviour. Wherefore I thought with my self, that I came nearer to Judas, than either to David or Peter.

122. Here again, my torment would flame out, and afflict me; yea, it would grind me as it were to powder, to discern the preservation of God towards others, while I fell into the snare: For in my thus considering of other mens sins, and comparing of them with my own, I could evidently see how God preserved them notwithstanding their wickedness, and would not let them, as he had let me, to become a son of perdition.

123. But O how did my Soul at this time prize the preservation that God did set about his People! Ah how safely did I see them walk, whom God had hedged in! they were within his care, protection and special providence: though they were full as bad as I by nature, yet because he loved them, he would not suffer them to fall without the range of Mercy: but as for me, I was gone, I had done it, he would not preserve me, nor keep me, but suffered me, because I was a Reprobate, to fall as I had done. Now did those blessed places that spake of Gods keeping his People, shine like the Sun before me, though not to comfort me, but to shew me the blessed state and heritage of those whom the Lord had blessed.

124. Then again, I began to compare my sin with the sin of Judas, that if possible I might find that mine differed from that which in truth is unpardonable; and O thought I, if it should be but the breadth of an hair, what a happy condition is my Soul in! And by considering, I found that Judas did his intencionally, but mine was against my strivings; besides, his was committed with much deliberation, but mine in a fearful hurry, on a sudden.

den. Thus I was tossed to and fro, like the Locusts, and driven from trouble to sorrow; hearing always the sound of *Esau's* fall in mine ears, and of the dreadful consequences thereof.

125. Yet this consideration about *Judas* his sin, was for a while some little relief unto me: for I saw I had not, as to the circumstances, transgressed so foully as he: but this was quickly gone again, for I thought with my self there might be more ways then one to commit the unpardonable sin; and that too, there might be degrees of that, as well as of other transgressions: wherefore, for ought I yet could perceive, this iniquity of mine might be such as might never be passed by.

126. Then was I struck into a very great trembling, insomuch that at sometimes I could for whole days together feel my very body as well as my minde to shake and totter under the sence of the dreadful Judgement of God, that should fall on those that have sinned that most fearful and unpardonable sin. I felt also such a clogging and heat at my stomach by reason of this my terrour, that I was, especially at some times, as if my breast-bone would have split in sunder. Then I thought of that concerning *Judas*, Who by his falling headlong, burst asunder, and all his bowels gushed out, Act. 1.

127. I feared also that this was the mark that the Lord did set on *Cain*, even continual fear and trembling under the heavy load of guilt that he had charged on him for the blood of his Brother *Abel*. Thus did I wind, and twine, and shrink under the burden that was upon me; which burden also did so oppress me, that I could neither stand nor go, nor lie either at rest or quiet.

127. Yet that saying would sometimes come to mind, *He hath received gifts for the rebellious*, Psal. 68. 18. The rebellious? thought I; Why surely they

are such as once were under subjection to their Prince, even those who after they have sworn subjection to his Government, have taken up arms against him.

128. This sometimes I thought on, and should labour to take hold thereof; that some, though small, refreshment might have been conceived by me: but in this also I missed of my desire, I was driven with force beyond it, like a man that is going to the place of execution, even by that place where he would fain creep in, and hide himself, but may not.

129. Again, After I had thus considered the sins of the Saints in particular, and found mine went beyond them; then I began to think thus with myself: Set case I should put all theirs together, and mine alone against them, might I not then finde some encouragement? for if mine, though bigger than any one, yet should but be equal to all, then there is hopes: for that Blood that hath vertue enough to wash away all theirs, hath also vertue enough to do away mine, though this one be full as big, if no bigger, then all theirs. Here again I should consider the sin of *David*, of *Solomon*, of *Manasseh*, of *Peter*, and the rest of the great offenders, and should also labour what I might, with fairness, to aggravate and heighen their sins by several circumstances: but alas! 'twas all in vain.

130. This one consideration would always kill my Heart, *My sin was point-blank against my Saviour*, and that too at that height, that I had in my heart said of him, *Let him go if he will*. O me thoughts, this sin was bigger than the sins of a Countrey, of a Kingdom, or of the whole World, no one pardonable, nor all of them together, was able to equal mine, mine out-went them every one.

131. Now I should feel my minde to flee from

God, as from the face of a dreadful Judge; yet this was my torment, I could not escape his hand. (*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb. 10.*) But blessed be his grace, that Scripture in these flying fits would call, as running after me, I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee, Isa. 44. 22. but I could not return, but fled, though at some times it cried, Return, as if it did hollow after me: for I feared to close in therewith, lest it should not come from God, for that other was still sounding in my conscience, *For you know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected, &c.*

132. All this while my life hung in doubt before me, not knowing which way I should tip; onely this I found my Soul desire, even to cast it self at the foot of Grace by Prayer and Supplication. But O'twas hard for me to bear the face to pray to this Christ for mercie, against whom I had thus most vilely sinned! yet I knew this must be the way, for mercy was no where else.

133. Which when the Tempter perceived, he strongly suggested to me, That I ought not to pray to God, for Prayer was not for any in my case, neither could it do me good, because I had rejected the Mediator, by whom all Prayers came with acceptance to God the Father, and without whom no Prayer could come into his presence; wherefore now to pray, is but to adde sin to sin: yea, now to pray, seeing God hath cast you off, is the next way to anger and offend him more then ever you did before.

134. For God (said he) hath been weary of you for these several years already, because you are none of his; you banling in his ears hath been no pleasant voice to him, and therefore he let you sin

this sin, that you might be quite cut off, and will you pray still? This the Devil urged, and set forth by that in *Numbers*, which *Moses* said to the Children of *Israel*, *That because they would not go up to possess the Land when God would have them, therefore for ever after he did bay them out from thence, though they prayed they might with tears, Numb. 14. 36, 37, &c.*

135. As 'tis said in another place, *Exod. 21. 14. The man that sins presumptuously, shall be taken from Gods Altar, that he may die: Even as Joab was by King Solomon, when he thought to find shelter there, 1 King. 2. 27, 28, &c.* These places did pinch me very sore; yet my case being desperate, I thought with myself, I can but die, and if it must be so, it shall once be said, *That such a one died at the foot of Christ in Prayer: this I did, but with great difficulty, God doth know; for still that saying about Esau would be set at my heart, even like a flaming sword, to keep the way of the tree of Life, lest I should take thereof, and live. O who knows how hard a thing I found it to come to God in prayer!*

136. I did also desire the Prayers of the People of God for me, but I feared that God would give them no heart to do it; yea, I trembled in my Soul to think that some or other of them shortly would tell me, that God had said those words to them that he once did say to the Prophet concerning the Children of *Israel*, *Pray not for this People, for I have rejected them, Jer. 11. 14. So, Pray not for him, for I have rejected him: Yea, I thought that he had whispered this to some of them already, onely they durst not tell me so, neither durst I ask them of it, for fear if it should be so, it would make me quite besides my self. Man knows the beginning of sin (said Spira) but who bounds the issues thereof?*

137. Now also did the Tempter begin to mock me

me in my misery, saying, That seeing I had thus parted with the Lord Jesus, and provoked him to displeasure who should have stood between my Soul and the flame of devouring fire, the way was now but one, and that was, to pray that God the Father would be the Mediator betwixt his Son and me, that we might be reconciled again, and that I might have that blessed benefit in him that his blessed Saints enjoyed.

138. Then did that Scripture seize upon my Soul, *He is of one mind, and who can turn him?* Oh I saw 'twas as easie to perswade him to make a new world, a new Covenant, or new Bible besides that we have already, as to pray for such a thing: this was to perswade him that what he had done already was meer folly, and to perswade with him to alter, yea, to disanul the whole way of salvation; and then would that saying rent my Soul asunder, *Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other Name under heaven, given amongst men, whereby we must be saved, Act. 4. 12.*

139. Now the most free, and full, and gracious words of the Gospel, were the greatest torment to me; yea, nothing so afflicted me as the thoughts of Jesus Christ: for the remembrance of a Saviour, because I had cast him off, brought both the villany of my sin, and my loss by it, to mind. O'tis sad to be destroyed by the grace and mercy of God; to have the Lamb, the Saviour, turn Lyon and Destroyer, *Rev. 6.* I also trembled at the sight of the Saints of God, especially at those that greatly loved him, and that made it their business to walk continually with him in this world: for they did both in their words, their carriages, and all their expressions of tenderness and fear to sin against their precious Saviour, condemn, lay guilt upon, and also add continual affliction and thame unto my Soul.

140. Now

140. Now also the Tempter began afresh to mock my Soul, saying, That Christ indeed did pity my case, and was sorry for my loss: but for as much as I had sinned, and transgressed as I had done, he could by no means help me, nor save me from what I feared; for my sin was not of the nature of theirs, for whom he bled and died, neither was it counted with those that were laid to his charge when he hanged on the tree; therefore unless he should come down from Heaven, and die anew for this sin, though indeed he did greatly pity me, yet I could have no benefit of him.

141. But O how this would add to my affliction, to conceit that I should be guilty of such a sin, for which he did not die! These thoughts would so confound me, and imprison me, and tie me up from Faith, that I knew not what to do: but Oh thought I, that he would come down again, O that the work of Mans Redemption was yet to be done by Christ; how would I pray him, and intreat him to count and reckon this sin amongst the rest for which he died? But that would strike me down *Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; Death hath no more Dominion over him, Rom. 6.9.*

142. Thus was I always sinking, whatever I did think or do. So one day I walked to a Neighbouring Town, and sat down upon a Settle in the Street, and fell into a very deep pause about the most fearful state my sin had brought me to; and after long musing, I lifted up my head, but my thought I saw as if the Sun that shineth in the heavens did grudge to give me light, and as if the very stones in the street, and tiles upon the houses did bend themselves against me. O how happy now was every creature over I was! for they stood fast, and kept their station, but I was gone and lost.

143. Then breaking out in the bitterness of my Soul, I said with a grievous sigh, *How can God comfort such a wretch as I?* I had no sooner said it, but this returned upon me, as an eccho doth answer a voice, *This sin is not unto death.* At which I was as if I had been raised out of a grave, and cryed out again, *Lord, how couldst thou find out such a word as this?* For I was filled with admiration at the firmness, and also at the unexpectedness of the sentence.

144. Now I was in hopes that my sin was not unpardonable, but that there might be hopes for me to obtain forgiveness. But O how Satan now did lay about him, for to bring me down again! But he could by no means do it, neither this day, nor the most part of the next: for this good sentence stood like a Mill-post at my back. Yet towards the evening of the next day, I felt this word begin to leave me, and to withdraw its supportation from me, and so I returned to my old fears again, but with a great deal of grudging and peevishness, for I feared the sorrow of it.

145. But the next day at evening, being under many fears, I went to seek the Lord; and as I prayed, I cryed to him in these words: *O Lord, I beseech thee shew me that thou hast loved me with an everlasting love,* Jer. 31. 3. I had no sooner said it, but with sweetness it returned upon me, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.* Now I went to bed at quiet, also when I awaked the next morning, it was fresh upon my Soul.

146. But yet the Tempter left me not, for it could not be so little as an hundred times that he that day did labour to break my peace. O the combats and conflicts that I did then meet with! as I strove to hold by this word, that of *Esau* would flie in my face, like to Lightning: I should be sometimes up and down twenty times in an hour. Yet God did bear

bear me up, and keep my heart upon this word, from which I had also for several days together very much sweetness and comfortable hopes of pardon. For thus it was made out to me, *I loved thee whilst thou wast committing this sin, I loved thee before, I love thee still, and I will love thee for ever.*

147. Yet I saw my sin most barbarous, and a filthy crime, and could not but conclude, and that with great shame and astonishment, that I had horribly abused the holy Son of God: wherefore I felt my soul greatly to love and pity him, and my bowels to yearn towards him: for I saw he was still my friend, and did reward me good for evil: yea, the love and affection that then did burn within to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, did work at this time such strong and hot desire of revengement upon my self for the abuse I had done unto him, that, to speak as then I thought, had I had a thousand gailons of blood within my veins, I could freely have spilt it all at the command and feet of this my Lord and Saviour.

148. And as I was thus in musing, and in my studies how to love the Lord, and to express my love to him, that saying came in upon me, *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who should stand? but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared,* Psal. 130. 4. These were good words to me, especially the latter part thereof, to wit, that there is forgiveness with the Lord, that he might be feared; that is, as then I understood it, that he might be loved, and had in reverence: for it was thus made out to me, *That the great God did set so high an esteem upon the love of his poor Creatures, that rather then he would go without their love, he would pardon their transgressions.*

149. And now was that word fulfilled on me, and I was also refreshed by it, *Then shall they be asha-*

med and confounded, and never open their mouth any more because of their shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God, Ezek. 16.36. Thus was my Soul at this time (and as I then did think for ever) set at liberty from being again afflicted with my former guilt and amazement.

150. But before many weeks were over, I began to dispond again, fearing lest notwithstanding all that I had injoyed, that yet I might be deceived and destroyed at the last: for this consideration came strong into my mind, That whatever comfort and peace I thought I might have from the word of the Promise of Life; yet unless there could be found in my refreshment a concurrence and agreement in the Scriptures, let me think what I will thereof, and hold it never so fast, I should finde no such thing at the end: For the Scriptures cannot be broken, John 10.35.

151. Now began my heart again to ake, and fear I might meet with disappointment at the last. Wherefore I began with all seriousness to examine my former comfort, and to consider whether one that had sinned as I have done, might with confidence trust upon the faithfulness of God laid down in those words by which I had been comforted, and on which I had leaned my self; but now was brought those sayings to my minde, For it is impossible for those who were once enlightned and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the Powers of the World to come; if they shall fall away, to renew th. m again unto repentance, Heb. 6. For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgement and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the adversaries, Heb. 10.

Even

Even as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his Birthright; for you know how that afterwards when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance; though he sought it carefully with tears, Heb. 12.

152. Now was the word of the Gospel forced from my Soul, so that no Promise or Encouragement was to be found in the Bible for me: and now would that saying work upon my spirit to afflict me, *Rejoyce not, O Israel, for joy, as other People,* Hos. 9. 1. for I saw indeed there was cause of rejoycing for those that held to Jesus; but as for me, I had cut my self off by my transgressions, and left my self neither foot-hold nor hand-hold amongst all the staves and props in the precious Word of Life.

153. And truly I did now feel my self to sink into a gulf, as an house whose foundation is destroyed. I did liken my self in this condition unto the case of some Child that was fallen into a Mill-pit, who though it could make some shift to scramble and spraul in the water, yet because it could find neither hold for hand nor foot, therefore at last it must die in that condition. So soon as this fresh assault had fastened on my Soul, that Scripture came into my heart, *This is for many days,* Dan. 10. 14. and indeed I found it was so: for I could not be delivered nor brought to peace again until well-nigh two years and an half were compleatly finished. Wherefore these words, though in themselves they tended to discouragement, yet to me, who feared this condition would be eternal, they were at some times as an help and refreshment to me.

154. For, thought I, *many days* are not for ever; *many days* will have an end; therefore seeing I was to be afflicted not a few, but *many days*, yet

I was glad it was but *for many days*. Thus, I say, I could recal my self sometimes, and give my self a help : for as soon as ever the words came in, at first I knew my trouble would be long, yet this would be but sometimes, for I could not always think on this, nor ever be helped though I did.

155. Now while these Scriptures lay before me, and laid sin at my door, that saying in the 18 of *Luke*, with others, did encourage me to prayer: then the Tempter again laid at me very sore, suggesting, That neither the mercy of God, nor yet the blood of Christ, did at all concern me, nor could they help me, for my sin : yet thought I, I will pray, but said the Tempter, Your sin is unpardonable. Yet said I, I will pray. So I went to prayer to God ; and while I was at prayer, I uttered words to this effect: *Lord, Satan tells me, That neither thy mercy nor Christs blood is sufficient to save my soul : Lord, shall I honour thee most by believing thou wilt and canst, or by believing thou neither wilt nor canst ? Lord, I would fain honour thee by believing thou wilt and canst.*

156. And as I was thus before the Lord, that Scripture fastned on my heart, *O man, great is thy Faith*, even as if one had clapt me on the back, as I lay on my knees before God ; yet I was not able to believe this till almost six months after, for I could not think that I had Faith, or that there should be a word for me to act Faith on ; therefore I should still be as sticking in the jaws of desperation, and went mourning up and down, crying, *Is his mercy clean gone ? is his mercy clean gone for ever ?* And I thought sometimes, even while I was groaning in these expressions, they did seem to make a question whether it was or no ; yet I greatly feared it was.

157. At another time I remember I was again much under the Question, Whether the blood of Christ was sufficient to save my Soul ? In which doubt,

doubt I continued from morning till about seven or eight at night ; and at last, when I was , as it were , quite worn out with fear lest it should not lay hold on me , those words did sound suddenly within me, *He is able* : but me thought this word *able*, was spoke so loud unto me , it shewed such a great word , and gave such a jussle to my fear and doubt, (I mean for the time it tarried with me, which was about a day) as I never had from that, all my life either before or after that, *Heb. 7. 25.*

158. But one morning when I was again at prayer and trembling under the fear of this, that no word of God could help me, that piece of a sentence darted in upon me , *My Grace is sufficient.* At this me thought I felt some stay, as if there might be hope. But O how good a thing is it for God to send his Word ! for about a fortnight before, I was looking on this very place, and then I thought it could not come near my Soul with comfort, and threw down my Book in a pet ; but now it was as if it had arms of grace so wide, that it could not onely inclose me, but many more besides.

159. By these words I was sustained , yet not without exceeding conflicts , for the space of seven or eight weeks : for my peace would be in and out sometimes twenty times a day : Comfort now, and Trouble presently ; Peace now, and before I could go a furlong, as full of Fear and Guilt as ever heart could hold ; and this was not onely now and then, but my whole seven weeks experience : for this about the sufficiency of grace, and that of *Esau's* parting with his Birth-right , would be like a pair of scales within my mind, sometimes one end would be uppermost, and sometimes again the other, according to which would be my peace or trouble.

160. Therefore I still did pray to God , that he would come in with this Scripture more fully

my heart, to wit, that he would help me to apply the whole sentence; for as yet it only helped me thus far; *My grace is sufficient*; and tho it came no farther, it answered my former question, to wit, that there was hope; yet, because *for thee*, was left out, I was not contented, but prayed to God for that also: wherefore, one day as I was in a Meeting of Gods People, full of sadness and terror, for my fears again were strong upon me, and as I was now thinking, my Soul was never the better, but my case most sad and fearful, these words did with great power suddenly break in upon me, *My grace is sufficient for thee, my grace is sufficient for thee, my grace is sufficient for thee*; three times together; and, O me-thought that every word was a mighty word unto me; as *my*, and *grace*, and *sufficient*, and *for thee*; they were then, and sometimes are still, far bigger than others be.

162. At which time, my Understanding was so enlightened; that I was as though I had seen the Lord Jesus look down from Heaven through the Tiles upon me, and direct these words unto me; this sent me mourning home, it broke my heart, and filled me full of joy, and laid me as low as the dust, only it staid not long with me, I mean in this glory and refreshing comfort, yet it continued with me for several weeks, and did encourage me to hope. But so soon as that powerfull operation of it was taken off my heart, that other about *Esau* returned upon me as before, so my soul did hang in a pair of Scales again, sometimes up, and sometimes down, now in peace, and anon again in terror.

163. Thus I went on for many weeks, sometimes comforted, and sometimes tormented, and specially at sometimes my torment would be

very sore, for all those Scriptures fore-nam'd in the Hebrews would be set before me, as the only Sentences that would keep me out of Heaven. Then again I should begin to repent, that ever that thought went thorow me; I should also think thus with my self, why, How many Scriptures are there against me? there is but three or four, and cannot God miss them, and save me for all them? Sometimes again I should think, O if it were not for these three or four words, now how might I be comforted! and I could hardly forbear at sometimes, but to wish them out of the Book.

164. Then methought I should see as if both Peter, and Paul, and John, and all the Writers did look with scorn upon me, and hold me in derision; and as if they said unto me, All our words are truth, one of as much force as another; it is not we that have cur'd you off, but you have call'd away your self; there is none of our sentences that you must take hold upon but these, and such as these; *It is impossible; there remains no more sacrifice for sin, Heb. 6. And it had been better for them not to have known the will of God, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them, Heb. 10. For the Scriptures cannot be broken, 2 Pet. 2. 21.*

165. Thus was I confounded, not knowing what to do nor how to be satisfied in this question, whether the Scriptures could agree in the salvation of my Soul? I quaked at the Apostles; I knew their words were true, and that they must stand for ever.

166. And I remember one day, as I was in divers frames of Spirit, and considering that these frames were still according to the nature of the several Scriptures that came in upon my mind; this of Grace, then I was quiet; but if that of Esau,

then tormented. Lord, thought I, if both these Scriptures would meet in my heart at once, I wonder which of them would get the better of me. So methought I had a longing mind that they might come both together upon me; yea, I desired of God they might.

167. Well, about two or three dayes after, so they did indeed; they bouled both upon me at a time, and did work and struggle strangely in me for a while; at last, that about *Esau's* birth-right began to wax weak, and withdraw, and vanish; and this about the sufficiency of Grace prevailed, with peace and joy. And as I was in a muse about this thing, that Scripture came home upon me, *Mercy rejoiceth against Judgement.*

168: This was a wonderment to me, yet truly I am apt to think it was of God, for the Word of the Law and Wrath, must give place to the Word of Life and Grace; because, though the Word of Condemnation be glorious, yet the Word of Life and Salvation, doth far exceed in glory, 2 Cor. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11. Mar. 9. 5, 6, 7. John 6. 37. Also, that *Moses* and *Elias* must both vanish, and leave Christ and his Saints alone.

169. This Scripture also did now most sweetly visit my soul; *And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* O the comfort that I have had from this word, in no wise! as who should say, by no means, for no thing, what-ever he hath done. But Satan would greatly labour to pull this promise from me, telling of me, that Christ did not mean me, and such as I, but sinners of a lower rank, that had not done as I had done. But I should answer him again, Satan, here is in this word no such exception, but *him that comes, him, my him, him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* And this I well remember still, that of all

the Sights that Satan used to take this Scripture from me; yet he never did so much as put this Question, But do you come aright? And I have thought the reason was, because he thought I knew full well, what coming was; for I saw that to come aright, was to come as I was, a vile and ungodly sinner, and to cast my self at the feet of Mercy, condemning my self for sin: If ever Satan and I did strive for any word, it was for this in *John*; he pull'd, and I pull'd, but God be praised, I got some sweetness from it.

170. But, notwithstanding all these helps and blessed words of grace, yet that of *Esaus* selling of his birth-right, would still at times distress my Conscience; for though I had been most sweetly comforted, and that but just before, yet when that came into mind, 'twould make me fear again. I could not be quite rid thereof, 'twould every day be with me: wherefore now I went another way to work, even to consider the nature of this blasphemous thought, I mean if I should take the words at the largest, and give them their own natural force and scope, even every word therein: So when I had thus considered, I found that if they were fairly taken, they would amount to this, That I had freely left the Lord Jesus Christ to his choice, whether he would be my Saviour or no, for the wicked words were these, *Let him go if he will*. Then that Scripture gave me hope, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, *Heb. 13. 5*. O Lord, said I, but I have left thee; then it answered again, *but I will not leave thee*. For this I thank God al o.

171. Yet I was grievous afraid he should, and found it exceeding hard to trust him, seeing I had so offended him: I could have been exceeding glad that this thought had never befallen, for

then I thought I could with more ease and freedom abundance have leaned upon his grace: I see it was with me as it was with *Josephs* Brethren, the guilt of their own wickedness did often fill them with fears, that their Brother would at last despise them, *Gen. 50. 15, 16, 17, 18.*

172. But above all the Scriptures that yet I did meet with, that in the twentieth of *Joshua*, was the greatest comfort to me, which speaks of the slayer that was to fly for refuge. And if the avenger of blood pursue the slayer, then, saith Moses, they that are the Elders of the City of Refuge, shall not deliver him into his hand; because he smote his Neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not afore-time. O blessed be God for this word! I was convinced that I was the slayer, and that the avenger of blood pursued me, that I felt with great terrour; only now it remained that I enquire, whether I have right to enter the City of Refuge? So I found, That he must not, who lay in wait to shed blood, but he who unwittingly, or that did unawares shed blood, even he who did not hate his Neighbour before. Wherefore,

173. I thought verily I was the man that must enter, for because I had smitten my Neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not afore-time. I hated him not afore-time, no I prayed unto him, was tender of sinning against him; yea, and against this wicked Temptation, I had strove for a twelvemoneth before; yea, and also when it did pass thorow my heart, it did it in spite of my teeth: Wherefore I thought I had right to enter this City, and the Elders, which are the Apostles, were not to deliver me up. This therefore was great comfort to me, and did give me much ground of hope,

174. Yet being very critical, for my sin had

made me that I knew not what ground was sure enough to bear me, I had one question that my Soul did much desire to be resolved about; and that was, *Whether it be possible for any Soul that hath indeed sinned the unpardonable sin, yet after that to receive, though but the least true spiritual comfort from God, thorow Christ?* the which, after I had much considered, I found the answer was, No, they could not: and that for these reasons:

175. First, Because those that have sinned that sin, they are debarred a share in the Blood of Christ, and being shut out of that, they must needs be void of the least ground of hope, and so of spiritual comfort; for to such there remains no more sacrifice for sin, Heb. 10. 26, 27. Secondly, Because they are denied a share in the promise of Life: they shall never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come, Mat. 12. 31. Thirdly, The Son of God excludes them also from a share in his blessed intercession, being for ever ashamed to own them both before his holy Father, and the blessed Angels in heaven, Mark 8.

176. When I had with much deliberation considered of this matter, and could not but conclude that the Lord had comforted me, and that too after this my wicked sin: then methought I durst venture to come nigh unto those most fearful and terrible Scriptures, with which all this while I had been so greatly affrighted, and on which indeed before I durst scarce cast mine eye, (yea, had much ado an hundred times to forbear wishing of them out of the Bible, for I thought they would destroy me) but now, I say, I began to take some measure of encouragement, to come close to them, to read them and consider them, and to weigh their scope and tendency.

177. The which when I began to do, I found their

their visage changed; for they looked not so grimly on me as before I thought they did: And first, I came to the sixth of the *Hebrews*, yet trembling for fear it should strike me; which, when I had considered, I found that the falling there intended was a falling quite away; that is, as I conceived, a falling from, and an absolute denial of, the Gospel of Remission of sins by Christ: for from them the Apostle begins his argument, *ver. 1, 2, 3*. Secondly, I found that this falling away must be openly, even in the view of the World, even so as to put Christ to an open shame. Thirdly, I found that those he there intendeth were for ever shut up of God both in blindness, hardness, and impenitency: *It is impossible they should be renewed again unto repentance*. By all these particulars, I found, to Gods everlasting praise, my sin was not the sin in this place intended.

178. Then I considered that in the tenth of the *Hebrews*; and found that the wilful Sin there mentioned, is not every wilful sin, but that sin which doth throw off Christ, and then his Commandments too. Secondly, That must also be done openly, before two or three witnesses, to answer that of the Law, *ver. 28*. Thirdly, This sin cannot be committed but with great despite done to the Spirit of Grace; despising both the dissuasions from that sin, and the persuasions to the contrary: But the Lord knows, though this my sin was devilish, yet it did not amount to these.

179. And as touching that in the twelfth of the *Hebrews*, about *Esaus* selling his Birth-right, though this was that which kill'd me, and stood like a Spear against me; yet now I did consider, First, That his was not a hasty thought against the continual labour of his mind; but a thought consented to, and put in practice likewise, and that

too after some deliberation, *Gen. 25.* Secondly, It was a publick and open action, even before his Brother, if not before many more; this made his sin of a far more hainous nature then otherwise it would have been. Thirdly, He continued to slight his Birth-right: *He did eat and drink, and went his way; thus Esau DESPISED his Birth-right:* yea, twenty year after he was found to despise it still, *And Esau said, I have enough, my Brother, keep that thou hast to thy self, Gen. 33. 9.*

180. Now as touching this, That *Esau sought a place of repentance*; thus I thought: First, This was not for the Birth-right, but for the Blessing; this is clear from the Apostle, and is distinguished by *Esau* himself, *He hath taken away my Birth-right, (that is, formerly) and now he hath taken away my Blessing also, Gen. 27. 36.* Secondly, Now this being thus considered, I came again to the Apostle, to see what might be the mind of God in a New-Testament stile and sence concerning *Esau's* sin; and so far as I could conceive, this was the mind of God, That the Birth-right signified Regeneration, and the Blessing the Eternal Inheritance; for so the Apostle seems to hint, *Lest there be any prophane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his Birth-right:* as if he should say, *Lest there be any person amongst you that shall cast off all those blessed beginnings of God that at present are upon him, in order to a new Birth, lest they become a Esau, even be rejected afterwards, when they would inherit the Blessing.*

181. For many there are, who in the day of Grace and Mercy despise those things which are indeed the Birth-right to Heaven, who yet when the deciding-day appears, will cry as loud as *Esau*, *Lord, Lord, open to us;* but then, as *Isaac* would not repent, no more will God the Father, but will

will say, *I have blessed these; yea, and they shall be blessed;* but as for you, *Depart, you are workers of iniquity.* Gen. 27. 22. Luk. 13. 25, 26, 27.

182. When *I* had thus considered these Scriptures, and found that thus to understand them was not against but according to other Scriptures, this still added further to my encouragement and comfort, and also gave a great blow to that objection, to wit, *That the Scriptures could not agree in the salvation of my Soul.* And now remained only the hinder part of the Tempest, for the thunder was gone beyond me, onely some drops did still remain, that now and then would fall upon me: but because my former frights and anguish were very sore and deep, therefore it did oft befall me still as it befalleth those that have been scared with fire, *I* thought every voice was fire, fire; every little touch would hurt my tender Conscience.

183. But one day, as *I* was passing in the field, and that too with some dashes on my Conscience, fearing lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my Soul, *Thy righteousness is in Heaven;* and methought withall, *I* saw with the eyes of my Soul Jesus Christ at Gods right hand, there, *I* say, as my Righteousness; so that wherever *I* was, or whatever *I* was a doing, God could not say of me, *He wants my Righteousness,* for that was just before him. *I* also saw moreover, that it was not my good frame of Heart that made my Righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my Righteousness worse: for my Righteousness was Jesus Christ himself, *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever,* Heb. 13. 8.

184. Now did my chains fall off my Legs indeed, *I* was loosed from my affliction and irons, my temptations also fled away: so that from that time those dreadful Scriptures of God left off to trouble

ble me ; now went I also home rejoycing, for the grace and love of God : So when I came home, I looked to see if I could find that Sentence, *Thy Righteousness is in Heaven*, but could not find such a Saying, wherefore my Heart began to sink again, onely that was brought to my remembrance, *He is made unto us of God, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption* ; by this word I saw the other Sentence true.

185. For by this Scripture, I saw that the Man Christ Jesus, as he is distinct from us, as touching his bodily presence, so he is our Righteousness and Sanctification before God : here therefore I lived, for some time, very sweetly at peace with God thorow Christ ; O merthought Christ ! Christ ! there was nothing but Christ that was before my eyes : I was not now onely for looking upon this and the other benefit of Christ apart, as of his Blood, Burial, or Resurrection, but considered him as whole Christ ; as he in whom all these, and all his other Vertues, Relations, Offices, and Operations met together, and that on the right hand of God in Heaven.

186. 'Twas glorious to me to see his exaltation, and the worth and prevalencie of all his benefits, and that because of this ; Now I could look from my self to him, and should reckon that all those Graces of God that now were green in me, were yet but like those crack'd-Groats and Four-pence-half-pennies that rich men carry in their Purses, when their Gold is in their Trunks at home : O I saw my Gold was in my Trunk at home ! in Christ my Lord and Saviour ! Now Christ was all ; all my Wisdom, all my Righteousness, all my Sanctification, and all my Redemption.

187. Further, The Lord did also lead me into the mystery of Union with this Son of God, that

I was joyned to him, that I was flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; and now was that a sweet word to me, in *Ephes. 5. 3.* By this also was my faith in him, as my Righteousness, the more confirmed to me; for if he and I were one, then his Righteousness was mine, his Merits mine, his Victory also mine. Now could I see my self in Heaven and Earth at once; in Heaven by my Christ, by my Head, by my Righteousness and Life, though on Earth by my Body or Person.

188. Now I saw Christ Jesus was looked on of God, and should also be looked upon by us as that common or publick person, in whom all the whole Body of his Elect are always to be considered and reckoned, that we fulfilled the Law by him, died by him, rose from the dead by him, got the Victory over sin, death, the devil, and hell, by him; when he died we died, and so of his Resurrection: *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise*, saith he, *Isa. 26.* and again, *After two dayes he will revive us, and the third day we shall live in his sight*, *Hos. 6. 2.* which is now fulfilled by the sitting down of the Son of Man on the right hand of the Majesty in the Heavens; according to that to the *Ephesians*, *He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, *Ephes. 2. 6.*

189. Ah these blessed considerations and Scriptures, with many other of a like nature, were in those days made to spangle in mine eyes, *Praise ye the Lord God in his Sanctuary, praise him in the firmament of his power, praise him for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness*, *Psal. 150. 1, 2.*

190. Having thus in few words given you a taste of the sorrow and affliction that my Soul went under by the guilt and terror that this my wicked thought

thought did lay me under ; and having given you also a touch of my deliverance therefrom, and of the sweet and blessed comfort that I met with afterwards, (which comfort dwelt about a twelvemonth with my heart, to my unspeakable admiration) I will now (God willing) before I proceed any further, give you in a word or two, what, as I conceive, was the cause of this Temptation ; and also after that, what advantage at the last it became unto my Soul.

191. For the causes, I conceived they were principally two, of which two also I was deeply convinced all the time this trouble lay upon me. The first was, For that I did not, when I was delivered from the Temptation that went before, still pray to God to keep me from Temptations that were to come: for though, as I can say in truth, my Soul was much in prayer before this tryal seized me, yet then I prayed onely, or at the most principally, for the removal of present troubles, and for such discoveries of love in Christ: which I saw afterwards was not enough to do ; I also should have prayed that the great God would keep me from the evil that was to come.

192. Of this I was made deeply sensible by the Prayer of holy David, who when he was under present mercy, yet prayed that God would hold him back from sin and temptation to come : *For then, saith he, shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the GREAT transgression*, Psal. 19. 13. by this very word was I galled and condemned, quite thorow this long temptation.

193. That also was another word that did much condemn me for my folly, in the neglect of this duty, Heb. 4. 16. *Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*: this I had not done, and

and therefore was suffered thus to sin and fall, according to what is written, *Pray, that ye enter not into temptation*: and truly this very thing is to this day of such weight and awe upon me, that I dare not, when I come before the Lord, go off my knees until I intreat him for help and mercy against the temptations that are to come: and I do beseech thee, Reader, that thou learn to beware of my negligence by the affliction that for this thing I did for days, and months, and years, with sorrow undergone.

194. Another cause of this temptation was, That I had tempted God; and on this manner did I do it: Upon a time my Wife was great with Child, and before her full time was come, her pangs, as of a woman in travel, were fierce and strong upon her, even as if she would immediately have fallen in labour, and been delivered of an untimely birth: now at this very time it was, that I had been so strongly tempted to question the being of God; wherefore as my Wife lay crying by me, I said, but with all secrecie imaginable, even thinking in my heart, *Lord, if thou wilt now remove this sad affliction from my Wife, and cause that she be troubled no more therewith this night* (and now were her pangs just upon her) *then I shall know that thou canst discern the most secret thought of the heart.*

195. I had no sooner said it in my heart, but her pangs were taken from her, and she was cast into a deep sleep, and so she continued till morning; at this I greatly marvelled, not knowing what to think; but after I had been awake a good while, and heard her cry no more, I fell to sleeping also: So when I waked in the morning, it came upon me again, even what I had said in my heart the last night, and how the Lord had shewed me that he knew my secret thoughts, which was a great astonishment

nishment unto me for several weeks after.

196. Well, about a year and an half afterwards that wicked sinful thought, of which I have spoken before, went thorow my wicked heart, even this thought, *Let Christ go if he will*; so when I was fallen under guilt for this, the remembrance of my other thought, and of the effect thereof, vould also come upon me vvith this retort, vvich carried also rebuke along vvith it, *Now you may see that God doth know the most secret thoughts of the heart, now you may see that God doth know the most secret thoughts of the heart!*

197. And vvith this, that of the passages that was betvvixt the Lord, and his servant *Gideon*, fell upon my spirit; how because that *Gideon* tempted God vvith his Fleece both vvet and dry, vvhen he should have believed and ventured upon his Word, therefore the Lord did afterwards so try him, as to send him against an innumerable company of Enemies, and that too, as to outward appearance, vvithout any strength or help, *Judg. Chap. 6, 7.* Thus he served me, and that justly, for I should have believed his Word, and not have put an if upon the all-seeingness of God.

198. And now to shew you something of the advantages that I also gained by this Temptation: And first, By this I vvvas made continually to possess in my Soul a very vvonderful sence both of the being and glory of God, and of his beloved Son; in the temptation before, my Soul vvvas perplexed vvith Atheism, but now the case vvvas otherwise, novv vvvas God and Christ continually before my face, though not in a vvay of comfort, but in a vvay of exceeding dread and terrour. The glory of the Holiness of God did at this time break me to peeces, and the Bowvells and Compassion of Christ did break me as on the Wheel; for I could

not

not consider him but as a lost and rejected Christ, the remembrance of which was as the continual breaking of my bones.

199. The Scriptures now also were wonderful things unto me; I saw that the truth and verity of them were the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; those the Scriptures favour, they must inherit bliss; but those they oppose and condemn, must perish for evermore: O this word, *For the Scriptures cannot be broken*, would rend the caul of my heart, and so would that other, *Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted, but whose sins ye retain, they are retained*: Now I saw the Apostles to be the Elders of the City of Refuge, *Josh. 20. 4.* those they were to receive in, were received to Life, but those that they shut out, were to be slain by the avenger of blood.

200. O! one sentence of the Scripture did more afflict and terrify my mind, I mean those sentences that stood against me, (as sometimes I thought they every one did) more, I say, than an Army of forty thousand men that might have come against me. Wo be to him against whom the Scriptures bend themselves.

201. By this Temptation I was made see more into the nature of the Promise, then ever I was before: for I lying now trembling under the mighty hand of God, continually torn and rent by the thunderings of his Justice; this made me, with careful heart and watchful eye, with great seriousness to turn over every leaf, and with much diligence mixt with trembling, to consider every sentence, together with its natural force and latitude.

202. By this Temptation also, I was greatly beaven off my former foolish practice, of putting by the Word of Promise when it came into my mind:

mind: for now, though *I* could not suck that comfort and sweetness from the Promise, as *I* had done at other times, yet, like to a man a sinking, *I* should catch at all *I* saw: formerly *I* thought *I* might not meddle with the Promise, unless *I* felt its comfort; but now 'twas no time thus to do, the Avenger of blood too hardly did pursue me.

203. Now therefore *I* was glad to catch at that word, which yet *I* feared *I* had no ground nor right to own; and even to leap into the Bosom of that Promise, that yet *I* feared did shut its heart against me. Now also *I* should labour to take the word as God had laid it down, without restraining the natural force of one syllable thereof: O what did *I* now see in that blessed sixth of *John*, *And him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out!* now *I* began to consider with my self, that God had a bigger mouth to speak with, than *I* had heart to conceive with; *I* thought also with my self, that he spake not his words in haste, or in an unadvised heat, but with infinite wisdom and judgement, and in very truth and faithfulness, 2 *Sam.* 3. 28.

204. *I* should in these dayes, often in my greatest agonies, even flounce towards the Promise (as the horses do towards sound ground, that yet stick in the mire) concluding (though as one almost bereft of his wits through fear) on this *I* will rest and stay, and leave the fulfilling of it to the God of heaven that made it. O! many a pull hath my heart had with Satan, for that blessed sixth of *John*: *I* did not now, as at other times, look principally for comfort (though O how welcome would it have been unto me!) but now a Word, a Word to lean a weary Soul upon, that *I* might not sink for ever.

205. Yea, often when *I* have been making to the Promise, *I* have seen as if the Lord would refuse my Soul for ever; *I* was often as if *I* had run upon

upon the pikes, and as if the Lord had thrust at me, to keep me from him, as with a flaming sword. Then I should think of *Esther*, who went to petition the King contrary to the Law, *Esth.* 4. 16. I thought also of *Benhadad's* servants, who went with ropes upon their heads to their Enemies for mercy, 1 *Kin.* 20. 31, &c. the woman of *Canaan* also, that would not be daunted, though called dog by Christ, *Mat.* 15. 22, &c. and the man that went to borrow bread at midnight, *Luk.* 11. 5, 6, 7, 8, &c. were great encouragements unto me.

206. I never saw those heights and depths in grace, and love, and mercy, as I saw after this temptation: great sins do draw out great grace; and where guilt is most terrible and fierce, there the mercy of God in Christ, when shewed to the Soul, appears most high and mighty: When *Job* had passed thorow his captivity, *he had twice as much as he had before*, *Job* 42. 10. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ our Lord. Many other things I might here make observation of, but I would be brief, and therefore shall at this time omit them; and do pray God that my harms may make others fear to offend, lest they also be made to bear the iron yoke as I.

207. Now I shall go forward to give you a relation of other of the Lords dealings with me, of his dealings with me at sundry other seasons, and of the temptations I then did meet withall. I shall begin vvith vvhat I met vvith vvhen I first did joyn in fellowship vvith the People of God in *Bedford*. After I had propounded to the Church, that my desire vvvas to vvalk in the Order and Ordinances of Christ vvith them, and vvvas also admitted by them; vvwhile I thought of that blessed Ordinance of Christ, vvwhich vvvas his last Supper vvith his Disciples before his death, that Scripture

Do this in remembrance of me, Lhk. 22. 19. was made a very precious word unto me; for by it the Lord did come down upon my conscience with the discovery of his death for my sins, and as I then felt, did as if he plunged me in the vertue of the same. But behold, I had not been long a partaker at that Ordinance, but such fierce and sad temptations did attend me at all times therein, both to blaspheme the Ordinance, and to wish some deadly thing to those that then did eat thereof; that lest I should at any time be guilty of consenting to these wicked and fearful thoughts, I was forced to bend my self all the while to pray to God to keep me from such blasphemies; and also to cry to God to bless the Bread and Cup to them, as it went from mouth to mouth: The reason of this temptation I have thought since was, because I did not with that reverence at first approach to partake thereof.

208. Thus I continued for three quarters of a year, and could never have rest nor ease; but at last the Lord came in upon my Soul with that same Scripture by which my Soul was visited before; and after that, I have been usually very well and comfortable in the partaking of that blessed Ordinance, and have I trust therein discerned the *Lords Body* as broken for my sins, and that his precious Blood had been shed for my transgressions.

209. Upon a time I was somewhat inclining to a Consumption, wherefore about the Spring, I was suddenly and violently seized with much weakness in my outward man; insomuch that I thought I could not live. Now began I afresh to give my self up to a serious examination after my state and condition for the future, and of my Evidences for that blessed world to come. For it hath, I bless the name of God, been my usual course, as alwayes, so especially in the day of affliction,

fiction, to endeavour to keep my interest in Life to come, clear before mine eye.

210. But I had no sooner began to recall to mind my former experience of the goodness of God to my Soul, but there came flocking into my mind an innumerable company of my sins and transgressions, amongst which these were at this time most to my affliction, namely, my deadness, dulness, and coldness in holy Duties, my wandrings of heart, my wearisomness in all good things, my want of love to God, his wayes and people, with this at the end of all, *Are these the fruits of Christianity? are these the tokens of a blessed man?*

211. At the apprehension of these things, my sickness was doubled upon me, for now was I sick in my inward man, my Soul was clog'd with guilt, now also was all my former experience of Gods goodness to me quite taken out of my mind, and hid as if it had never been, nor seen: Now was my Soul greatly pinched between these two considerations, *Live I must not, Die I dare not*: now I sunk and fell in my Spirit, and was giving up all for lost; but as I was walking up and down in the house, as a man in a most woful state, that word of God took hold of my heart, *Ye are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*, Rom. 3. 24.

212. Now was I as one awakened out of some troublesome sleep and dream, and listening to this heavenly sentence, I was as if I heard it thus expounded to me; Sinner, thou thinkest that because of thy sins and infirmities, I cannot save thy Soul; but behold my Son is by me, and upon him I look, and not on thee, and will deal with thee according as I am pleased with him: at this I was greatly lightened in my mind, and made to understand

that God could justify a Sinner at any time, it was but looking upon Christ, and imputing of his benefits to us, and the work was forthwith done.

213. And as I was thus in a muse, that Scripture came with great power upon my Spirit, *Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, &c.* 2 Tim. 1. 9. Tit. 3. 5. now was I got on high, I saw my self within the arms of Grace and Mercy; and though I was before afraid to think of a dying hour, yet now I cried, Let me die; now death was lovely and beautiful in my sight, for I saw we shall never live indeed till we be gone to the other World: O me. thought this life is but a slumber in comparison of that above: at this time also I saw more in those words, *Heirs of God*, Rom. 8. 17. then ever I shall be able to express while I live in this world: *Heirs of God!* God himself is the portion of the Saints: this I saw and wondered at, but cannot tell you what I saw.

214. At another time, though just before I was pretty well and savoury in my spirit, yet suddenly there fell upon me a great cloud of darkness, which did so hide from me the things of God and Christ, that I was as if I had never seen or known them in my life; I was also so over-run in my Soul with a senceless heartless frame of spirit, that I could not feel my Soul to move or stir after grace and life by Christ; I was as if my loyns were broken, or as if my hands and feet had been tied or bound with chains. At this time also I felt some weakness to seiz my outward man; which made still the other affliction the more heavy and uncomfortable.

215. After I had been in this condition some three or four days, as I was sitting by the fire, I suddenly felt this word to sound in my heart,

must

must go to *Jesus*; at this my former darkness and atheism fled away, and the blessed things of heaven were set within my view; while I was on this sudden thus overtaken with surprize; Wife, said I, is there ever a such Scripture, *I must go to Jesus*? she said she could not tell; therefore I sat musing still to see if I could remember such a place, I had not sat above two or three minutes, but that came bolting in upon me, *And to an innumerable company of Angels*; and withall *Hebrews* the twelfth about the mount *Zion* was set before mine eyes.

216. Then with joy I told my Wife, O now I know, I know! but that night was a good night to me, I never had but few better; I longed for the company, of some of Gods people, that I might have imparted unto them what God had shewed me: Christ was a precious Christ to my Soul that night; I could scarce lie in my Bed for joy, and peace, and triumph, thorow Christ; this great glory did not continue upon me until morning, yet that twelfth of the Author to the *Hebrews*, Heb. 12. 21, 22, 23. was a blessed Scripture to me for many days together after this.

217. The words are these, *You are come to mount Zion, to the City of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel*: Thorow this blessed Sentence the Lord led me over and over, first to this word, and then to that, and shewed me wonderful glory in every one of them. These words also have oft since this time been great refreshment to my Spirit. Blessed be God for having mercy on me.

*A brief Account of the Authors Call to
the Work of the Ministry.*

218. **A**Nd now I am speaking my Experience, I will in this place thrust in a word or two concerning my preaching the Word, and of Gods dealing with me in that particular also : For after I had been about five or six years awakened, and helped to see both the want and worth of Jesus Christ our Lord, and inabled to venture my Soul upon him : some of the most able among the Saints with us, I say the most able for Judgement, and holiness of Life, as they conceived, did perceive that God had counted me worthy to understand something of his Will in his holy and blessed Word, and had given me utterance in some measure to express, what I saw, to others for edification ; they desired me, and that with much earnestness, that I would be willing at sometime to take in hand in one of the Meetings to speak a word of Exhortation unto them.

219. The which, though at the first it did much dash and abash my spirit, yet being still by them desired and intreated, I consented to their request, and did twice at two several Assemblies (but in private) though with much weakness and infirmity, discover my Gift amongst them ; at which they not onely seemed to be, but did solemnly protest as in the sight of the great God, they were both affected and comforted, and gave thanks to the Father of Mercies for the grace bestowed on me.

220. After this, sometimes when some of them did go into the Countrey to teach, they would also that I should go with them ; where, though as yet I did

did not, nor durst not make use of my Gift in an open way, yet more privately still, as I came amongst the good People in those places, I did sometimes speak a word of Admonition unto them also; the which they, as the other, received with rejoycing at the mercy of God to me-ward, professing their Souls were edified thereby.

221. Wherefore, to be brief, at last, being still desired by the Church, after some solemn prayer to the Lord, with fasting, I was more particularly called forth, and appointed to a more ordinary and publick preaching the Word, not onely to and amongst them that believed, but also to offer the Gospel to those that had not yet received the faith thereof: about which time I did evidently find in my mind a secret pricking forward thereto: (tho I bless God not for desire of vain glory, for at that time I was most sorely afflicted with the fiery darts of the devil, concerning my eternal state.

222. But yet could not be content unless I was found in the exercise of my Gift, unto which also I was greatly animated, not onely by the continual desires of the Godly, but also by that saying of Paul to the Corinthians, *I beseech you, Brethren (ye know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints) that you submit your selves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth,* 1 Cor. 16. 15, 16.

223. By this Text I was made to see that the holy Ghost never intended that men who have Gifts and Abilities should bury them in the earth, but rather did command and stir up such to the exercise of their gift, and also did commend those that were apt and ready so to do, *they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints*: this Scripture in these days did continually run in my mind,

to incourage me, and strengthen me in this my work for God; I have been also incouraged from several other Scriptures and examples of the Godly, both specified in the Word and other ancient Histories. *Act. 8. 4. & 18. 24, 25. &c. 1 Pet. 4. 10. Rom. 12. 6. Fox Acts and Mon.*

224. Wherefore, though of my self, of all the Saints the most unworthy, yet I, but with great fear and trembling at the sight of my own weakness, did set upon the work, and did according to my Gift, and the proportion of my Faith, preach that blessed Gospel that God had shewed me in the holy Word of truth: which when the Countrey understood, they came in to hear the Word by hundreds, and that from all parts, though upon sundry and divers accounts.

225. And I thank God, he gave unto me some measure of bowels and pity for their Souls, which also did put me forward to labour with great diligence and earnestness to find out such a Word as might, if God would bless, lay hold of and awaken the Conscience; in which also the good Lord had respect to the desire of his Servant: for I had not preached long, before some began to be touched by the Word, and to be greatly afflicted in their minds at the apprehension of the greatness of their sin, and of their need of Jesus Christ.

226. But I at first could not believe that God should speak by me to the heart of any man, still counting my self unworthy; yet those who thus were touched, would love me, and have a peculiar respect for me; and though I did put it from me that they should be awakened by me, still they would confess it and affirm it before the Saints of God, they would also bless God for me (unworthy Wretch that I am!) and count me Gods Instrument that shewed to them the Way of Salvation.

227. Wherefore seeing them in both their words and deeds to be so constant, & also in their hearts so earnestly pressing after the knowledge of Jesus Christ, rejoicing that ever God did send me where they were : then I began to conclude it might be so, that God had owned in his Work such a foolish one as I ; and then came that Word of God to my heart with much sweet refreshment, *The blessing of them that were ready to perish is come upon me ; yea, I caused the widows heart to sing for joy,* Job 29. 13.

228. At this therefore I rejoiced, yea, the tears of those whom God did awaken by my preaching, would be both solace and encouragement to me ; for I thought on those Sayings, *Who is he that maketh me glad, but the same that is made sorry by me ?* 2 Cor. 2. 2. and again, *Though I be not an Apostle to others, yet doubtless I am unto you, for the seal of my Apostleship are ye in the Lord,* 1 Cor. 9. 2. These things therefore were as another argument unto me that God had called me to and stood by me in this Work.

229. In my preaching of the Word, I took special notice of this one thing, namely, That the Lord did lead me to begin where his Word begins with Sinners, that is, to condemn all flesh, and to open and alledge that the curse of God by the Law doth belong to and lay hold on all men as they come into the World, because of sin. Now this part of my work I fulfilled with great sence, for the terrors of the Law, and guilt for my transgressions, lay heavy on my Conscience. I preached what I felt, what I smartingly did feel, even that under which my poor Soul did groan and tremble to astonishment.

230. Indeed I have been as one sent to them from the dead ; I went my self in chains to preach to them in chains, and carried that fire in my own con-

conscience that I perswaded them to beware of. I can truly say, and that without dissembling, that when I have been to preach, I have gone full of guilt and terrour even to the Pulpit-Door, and there it hath been taken off, and I have been at liberty in my mind until I have done my work, and then immediately, even before I could get down the Pulpit-Stairs, have been as bad as I was before. Yet God carried me on, but surely with a strong hand: for neither guilt nor hell could take me off my Work.

231. Thus I went for the space of two years, crying out against mens sins, and their fearful state because of them. After which, the Lord came in upon my own Soul with some staid peace and comfort thorow Christ; for he did give me many sweet discoveries of his blessed Grace thorow him: wherefore now I altered in my preaching (for still I preached what I saw & felt) now therefore I did much labour to hold forth Jesus Christ in all his Offices, Relations and Benefits unto the World, and did strive also to discover, to condemn and remove those false supports and props on which the World doth both lean, and by them fall and perish. On these things also I staid as long as on the other.

232. After this, God led me into something of the mystery of union with Christ: wherefore that I discovered and shewed to them also. And when I had travelled thorow these three chief points of the Word of God, about the space of five years or more; I was caught in my present practice, and cast into Prison, where I have lain as long to confirm the Truth by way of Suffering, as I was before in testifying of it according to the Scriptures, in a way of Preaching.

233. When I have been in preaching, I thank God my heart hath often, all the time of this and the

the other exercise, with great earnestness cried to God that he would make the Word effectual to the salvation of the Soul; still being grieved lest the Enemy should take the Word away from the Conscience, and so it should become unfruitful: Wherefore I should labour so to speak the Word, as that thereby (if it were possible) the sin and person guilty might be particularized by it.

224. Also when I have done the Exercise, it hath gone to my heart to think the word should now fall as rain on stony places; still wishing from my heart, O that they who have heard me speak this day, did but see as I do, what sin, death, hell and the curse of God, is: and also what the grace, and love, and mercy of God is, thorow Christ, to men in such a case as they are, who are yet estranged from him; and indeed I did often say in my heart before the Lord, *That if to be hanged up presently before their eyes, would be a means to awaken them, and confirm them in the truth, I gladly should be contented.*

235. For I have been in my preaching, especially when I have been engaged in the Doctrine of Life by Christ, without Works, as if an Angel of God had stood by at my back to encourage me: O it hath been with such power and heavenly evidence upon my own Soul, while I have been labouring to unfold it, to demonstrate it, and to fasten it upon the Conscience of others, that I could not be contented with saying, I believe and am sure; methought I was more then sure, if it be lawful so to express my self, that those things which then I asserted, were true.

236. When I went first to preach the Word abroad, the Doctors and Priests of the Countrey did open wide against me; but I was perswaded of this, not to render rayling for rayling, but to see how

how many of their carnal Professors I could convince of their miserable state by the Law, and of the want and worth of Christ: for thought I, *This shall answer for me in time to come, when they shall be for my hire before their face*, Gen. 30. 33.

237. I never cared to meddle with things that were controverted, and in dispute amongst the Saints, especially things of the lowest nature; yet it pleased me much to contend with great earnestness for the Word of Faith, and the remission of sins by the Death and Sufferings of Jesus: but I say, as to other things, I should let them alone, because I saw they engendered strife, and because I saw that they neither in doing, nor in leaving undone, did commend us to God to be his: besides; I saw my Work before me did run in another channel, even to carry an awakening-Word; to that therefore did I stick and adhere.

238. I never endeavoured to, nor durst make use of other mens lines, Rom. 15. 18. (though I condemn not all that do) for I verily thought, and found by experience, that what was taught me by the Word and Spirit of Christ, could be spoken, maintained and stood on, by soundest and best established Conscience: and though I will not now speak all that I know in this matter; yet my experience hath more interest in that text of Scripture Gal. 1. 11, 12. than many amongst men are aware.

239. If any of those vvho vv ere awakened by my Ministry, did after that fall back (as sometimes too many did) I can truly say their loss hath been more to me, then if one of my own Children, begotten of my body, had been going to its grave; I think verily I may speak it vvithout an offence to the Lord, nothing hath gone so near me as that, unless it vv as the fear of the loss of the salvation of my ovvn Soul: I have counted as if I had goodly
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buildings and lordships in those places my Children were born : my heart hath been so wrapt up in the glory of this excellent work, that I counted my self more blessed and honored of God by this, than if he had made me the Emperour of the Christian World, or the Lord of all the glory of Earth without it : O that word, *He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, doth save a soul from death !*

240. I have observed, that where I have had a work to do for God, I have had first as it were the going of God upon my Spirit to desire I might preach there : I have also observed, that such and such Souls in particular have been strongly set upon my heart, and I stirred up to wish for their Salvation ; and that these very Souls have after this been given in as the fruits of my Ministry. I have also observed, that a word cast in by the by, hath done more execution in a Sermon then all that was spoken besides : sometimes also when I have thought I did no good, then I did most of all ; and at other times when I thought I should catch them, I have fished for nothing.

241 : My great desire in my fulfilling my Ministry, was, to get into the darkest places in the Country, even amongst those people that were furthest off of profession ; yet not because I could not endure the light (for I feared not to shew my Gospel to any) but because I found my spirit did lean most after awakening and converting-Work, and the Word that I carried did lead it self most that way ; *Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another mans foundation, Rom. 15. 20.*

242. In my preaching, I have really been in pain, and have as it were travelled to bring forth Children to God, neither could I be satisfied unless some fruits did appear in my work : if I were fruitless,

less, it matter'd not who commended me ; but if I were fruitful, I cared not who did condemn. I have thought of that, *He that winneth souls is wise*, Pro. 11.30. and again, *Lo Children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the Womb is his Reward: as arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are Children of the youth ; happy is the man that hath filled his quiver with them, they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the Enemies in the gate*, Psal. 127.3,4,5.

243. But in this work, as in all other, I had my temptations attending me, and that of divers kinds : as sometimes I should be assaulted with great discouragement, therein fearing that I should not be able to speak the Word at all to edification, nay, that I should not be able to speak sense unto the people ; at which times I should have such a stranger faintness and strengthlessness seiz upon my body, that my legs have scarce been able to carry me to the place of Exercise.

244. Sometimes again, when I have been preaching, I have bin violently assaulted with thoughts of blasphemy, and st. ongly tempted to speak them with my mouth before the Congregation. I have also at some times, even when I have begun to speak the Word with much clearness, evidence, and liberty of speech, yet been before the ending of that Opportunity so blinded, and so estranged from the things I have been speaking, and have also bin so straitned in my speech, as to utterance before the people, that I have been as if I had not known or remembred what I have been about ; or as if my head had been in a bag all the time of the exercise.

245. Again, When at sometimes I have been about to preach upon some smart and scorching portion of the Word, I have found the tempter suggest, What ! will you preach this ? this condemns your self ; of this your own Soul is guilty ; wherefore
preach

preach not of it at all, or if you do, yet so mince it as to make way for your own escape, lest instead of awakening others, you lay that guilt upon your own soul, as you will never get from under.

246. I have also, while found in this blessed work of Christ, been often tempted to pride and liftings up of heart; and though I dare not say, I have not been infected with this, yet truly the Lord of his precious mercy hath so carried it towards me, that for the most part I have had but small joy to give way to such a thing: for it hath been my every-days portion to be let into the evil of my own heart, and still made to see such a multitude of corruptions and infirmities therein, that it hath caused hanging down of the head under all my Gifts and Attainments: I have felt this thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12.8,9.) the very mercy of God to me.

247. I have had also together with this, some notable place or other of the Word presented before me, which word hath contained in it some sharp and piercing sentence concerning the perishing of the Soul, notwithstanding gifts and parts; as for instance, that hath been of great use unto me, *Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding-brass and a tinkling cymbal*, 1 Cor. 13.1,2.

248. A tinkling Cymbal is an instrument of Musick with which a skilful player can make such melodious and heart-inflaming Musick, that all who hear him play, can scarcely hold from dancing; and yet, behold, the Cymbal hath not life, neither comes the musick from it, but because of the art of him that plays therewith: so then the instrument at last may come to nought and perish, though in times past such musick hath been made upon it.

249. Just thus I saw it was and will be with them who have Gifts, but want saving-Grace; they are

in the hand of Christ, as the Cymbal in the hand of David; and as David could with the Cymbal make that mirth in the service of God, as to elevate the hearts of the Worshippers; so Christ can use these gifted men, as with them to affect the Souls of his People in his Church, yet when he hath done all hang them by, as lifeless, though sounding Cymbals

250. This consideration therefore, together with some others, were for the most part as a maul on the head of pride and desire of vain-glory: What, thought I, shall I be proud because I am a sounding Brass? is it so much to be a Fiddle? hath not the least Creature that hath life, more of God in it than these? besides, I knew 'twas Love should never die, but these must cease and vanish: So I concluded a little Grace, a little Love, a little of the true Fear of God, is better then all these Gifts: Yea, and I am fully convinced of it, that it is possible for a Soul that can scarce give a man an answer but with great confusion as to method, I say it is possible for them to have a thousand times more Grace, and so to be more in the love and favour of the Lord, then some who by vertue of the Gift of Knowledge, can deliver themselves like Angels.

A brief Account of the Authors Imprisonment

251. **H**AVING made profession of the glorious Gospel of Christ along time, and had preached the same about five year; I was apprehended at a Meeting of good People in the Countrey, amongst whom, had they let me alone, I should have preached that day, but they took me away from amongst them) and had me before a Justice, who, after I had offered security for my appear-

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ing at the next Sessions yet committed me, because my Sureties would not consent to be bound that I should preach no more to the people.

252. At the Sessions after, I was indicted for an Upholder and Maintainer of unlawful Assemblies and Conventicles, and for not conforming to the National Worship of the Church of *England*; and after some conference there with the Justices, was sentenced to perpetual banishment because I refused to Confor.n. So being again delivered up to the Goalers hands, I was had home to Prison again, and there have lain now above five year and a quarter, waiting to see what God will suffer these men to do with me.

253. In which condition I have continued with much content therow Grace, but have met with many ruings and goings upon my heart both from the Lord, Satan, and my own corruptions; by all which (glory be to Jesus Christ) I have also received, among many things, much conviction, instruction, and understanding, of which at large I shall not here discourse; onely give you, in a hint or two, a word that may stir up the Godly to bless God, and to pray for me; and also to take encouragement, shoud the case be their own, *Not to fear what man can do unto them.*

254. I never had in all my life so great an interest into the Word of God as now: them Scriptures that I saw nothing in before, are made in this place and stare to shine upon me. Jesus Christ also was never more real and apparent then now; here I have seen him, and felt him indeed: O that word, *We have not preached unto you cunningly devised fables*, 2 Pet. i. 16. and that, *God raised Christ from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God*, 1 Pet. i. 20. were blessed words unto me in this my imprisoned condition.

255. These three or four Scriptures also have been great refreshment, in this condition, to me; *Joh. 14. 1, 2, 3, 4. Joh. 16. 33. Col. 3. 3, 4. Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24.* So that sometimes, when I have been in the favour of them, I have been able to laugh at destruction, and to fear neither the Horse nor his Rider. I have had sweet sights of the forgiveness of my sins in this place, and of my being with Jesus in another world: O the Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of Angels, and God the Judge of all, and the Spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus, have been sweet unto me in this place: I have seen that here, that I am perswaded I shall never, while in this world, be able to express; I have seen a truth in that Scripture, *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Pet. 1. 8.*

256. I never knew what it was for God to stand by me at all turns, and at every offer of Satan, &c. as I have found him since I came in hither; for look how fears have presented themselves, so have supports and encouragements; yea, when I have started even as it were at nothing else but my shadow, yet God, as being very tender of me, hath not suffered me to be molested, but would with one Scripture and another strengthen me against all: insomuch that I have often said, *Were it lawful, I could pray for greater trouble, for the greater comfort's sake, Eccles. 7. 14. 2 Cor. 1. 5.*

257. Before I came to Prison, I saw what was a coming, and had especially two Considerations warm upon my heart; the first was, How to be able to endure, should my imprisonment be long and tedious; the second was, How to be able to encounter death, should that be here my portion. For the first of these, that Scripture *Col. 1. 11.* was great

great information to me, namely, to pray to God to be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness: I could seldom go to prayer before I was imprisoned, but for not so little as a year together, this Sentence or Sweet Petition, would as it were thrust it self into my mind, and perswade me that if ever I would go thorow long-suffering, I must have all patience, especially if I would endure it joyfully.

258. As to the second Consideration, that Saying 2 Cor. 1. 9. was of great use unto me, But we had the sentence of death in our selves, that we might not trust in our selves, but in God that raiseth the dead: by this Scripture I was made to see that if ever I would suffer rightly, I must first pass a sentence of death upon every thing that can properly be called a thing of this life, even to reckon my Self, my Wife, my Children, my health, my enjoyments and all, as dead to me, & my self as dead to them.

259. The second was, to live upon God that is invisible; as Paul said in another place, The way not to faint, is to look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen, are temporal; but the things that are not seen, they are eternal: and thus I reasoned with my self; If I provide onely for a prison, then the whip comes at unawares, and so does also the pillory; again, if I provide onely for these, then I am not fit for banishment; further, if I conclude that banishment is the worst, then if death comes, I am surprized; so that I see the best way to go thorow sufferings, is to trust in God thorow Christ, as touching the world to come; and as touching this world, to count the grave my house, to make my bed in darkness, to say to Corruption, Thou art my Father, and to the Worm, Thou art my Mother and Sister; that is, to familiarize these things to me.

260. But notwithstanding these helps, I found my self a man, and compassed with infirmities; the parting with my Wife and poor Children hath oft been to me in this place, as the pulling the flesh from my bones; and that not onely because I am somewhat too too fond of these great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the many hardships, miseries and wants that my poor family was like to meet with, should I be taken from them, especially my poor blind Child, who lay neerer my heart than all I had besides; O the thoughts of the hardship I thought this might go under, would break my heart to pieces.

261. Poor Child! thought I, what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world? thou must be beaten, must beg, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow upon thee: but yet recalling my self, thought I, I must venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you: O I saw in this condition I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his Wife and Children; yet thought I, I must do it, I must do it: and now I thought of those two milch Kine that were to carry the Ark of God into another Country, and to leave their Calves behind them, 1 Sam. 6. 10, 11, 12.

262. But that which helped me in this temptation, was divers considerations, of which three in special here I will name; the first was, the consideration of those two Scriptures, *Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy riddows trust in me*: and again, *The Lord said, Verily it shall go well with thy remnant, verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil, &c.*

263. I had also this consideration, that if I should now venture all for God, I engaged God to take care

care of my concernments; but if I forsook him and his ways, for fear of any trouble that should come to me or mine, then I should not only falsifie my profession, but should count also that my concernments were not so sure if left at Gods feet, while I stood to and for his Name, as they would be if they were under my own tuition, though with the denial of the way of God. This was a smarting consideration, and was as spurs unto my flesh: that Scripture also greatly helped it to fasten the more upon me, where Christ plays against *Judas*, that God would disappoint him in all his selfish thoughts, which moved him to sell his Master. Pray read it soberly, *Psal.* 109. 6, 7, 8, &c.

264. I had also another consideration, and that was, The dread of the torments of Hell, which I was sure they must partake of, that for fear of the Cross do shrink from their profession of Christ, his Word and Laws, before the sons of men: and of the glory that he had prepared for those that in faith, and love, and patience, stood to his ways before them. These things, I say, have helped me, when the thoughts of the misery that both my self and mine might, for the sake of my profession, be exposed to, hath lain pinching on my mind.

265. When I have indeed conceived that I might be banished for my Profession, then I have thought of that Scripture, *They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy, for all they thought they were too bad to dwell and abide amongst them.* I have also thought of that saying, *The holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, that bonds and afflictions abide me;* I have yettily thought that my Soul and it, have sometimes reasoned about the sore & sad estate of a banished

and exiled condition, how they are exposed to hunger, to cold, to perils, to nakedness, to enemies, and a thousand calamities; and at last it may be to die in a ditch like a poor forlorn and desolate sheep. But I thank God hitherto I have not been moved by these most delicate reasonings, but have rather by them more approved my heart to God.

266. I will tell you of a pretty business: I was once above all the rest in a very sad and low condition for many weeks, at which time also I being but a young Prisoner, and not acquainted with the Laws, had this lay much upon my spirit, That my imprisonment might end at the Gallows for ought that I could tell; now therefore Satan laid hard at me to beat me out of heart, by suggesting thus unto me: But how if when you come indeed to die, you should be in this condition; that is, as not to savour the things of God, not to have any evidence upon your soul for a better state hereafter (for indeed at that time all the things of God were hid from my soul)

267. Wherefore when I at first began to think of this, it was a great trouble to me: for I thought with my self, that in the condition I now was in, I was not fit to die, neither indeed did think I could if I should be called to it: besides, I thought with my self, if I should make a scrabbling shift to clamber up the Ladder, yet I should either with quaking or other symptoms of faintings, give occasion to the enemy to reproach the way of God and his People, for their timorousness: this therefore lay with great trouble upon me, for methought I was ashamed to die with a pale face, and tottering knees, for such a Cause as this.

268: Wherefore I prayed to God that he would comfort me, and give me strength to do and suffer what he should call me to; yet no comfort appear'd

but

but all continued hid : I was also at this time so really possessed with the thought of death, that oft I was as if I was on the Ladder, with the Rope about my neck, onely this was some encouragement to me, I thought I might have now an opportunity to speak my last words to a multitude which I thought would come to see me die ; and, thought I, if it must be so, if God will but convert one Soul by my very last words, I shall not count my life thrown away, nor lost.

269 But yet all the things of God were kept out of my sight, and still the tempter followed me with, *But whether must you go when you die ? what will become of you ? where will you be found in another world ? what evidence have you for heaven and glory, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified ?* Thus was I troubled for manie weeks, and knew not what to do ; at last this consideration fell with weight upon me, That it was for the Word and Way of God that I was in this condition, wherefore I was engaged not to flinch a hairs breadth from it.

270 I thought also, that God might chuse whether he would give me comfort now, or at the hour of death ; but I might not therefore chuse whether I would hold my profession or no : I was bound, but he was free ; yea, twas my dutie to stand to his Word, whether he would ever look upon me or no, or save me at the last : Wherefore, thought I, the point being thus, I am for going on, and venturing my eternal state with Christ, whether I have comfort here or no ; if God does not come in, thought I, I will leap off the Ladder even blindfold into Fierie, for or swim, come heaven, come hell ; Lord Jesus, if thou wilt catch me, do ; I will venture for thy Name.

271. I was no sooner fixed upon this resolution, but that Word dropt upon me, *Doth Job serve God for nothing ?* as if the accuser had said, Lord, Job is no upright man, he serves thee for by-respects, hast thou not made a hedge about him, &c. but put forth now thy hand, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face : How now ? thought I, is this the sign of an upright Sou, to desire to serve God when all is taken from him ? is he a goodlie man that will serve God for nothing rather than give out ? blessed be God, then I hope I have an upright heart, for I am resolved (God give me strength) never to denie my profession, though I have nothing at all for my pains ; and as I was thus considering, that Scripture was set before me, Psa. 44. 13, &c.

272. Now was my heart full of comfort, for I hoped it was sincere ; I would not have been without this trial for
much

much, I am comforted everie time I think of it, and I hope shall bless God for ever for the teaching I have had by it. Many more of the Dealings of God towards me I might relate, but these out of the spoils won in Battel have I dedicated to maintain the House of God, 1 Chron. 26. 27.

THE CONCLUSION.

1. **O**f all the Temptations that ever I met with in my life to question the being and truth of the Gospel, is the worst, and worst to be bidden; when this temptation comes, it takes away my girdle from me, and removeth the foundation from under me: O I have often thought of that word, *Have your loynes girt about with truth*; and of that, *When the foundations are destroyed what can the Righteous do?*

2. I have wondered much at this one thing, that though God doth visit my Soul with never so blessed a discoverie of himself, yet I have found again, that such hours have attended me afterwards, that I have been in my spirit so filled with darkness, that I could not so much as once conceive what that God and that comfort was with which I have been refreshed.

3. I have sometimes seen more in a line of the Bible, then I could well tell how to stand under, & yet at another time the whole Bible hath been to me as drie as a stick, or rather my heart hath been so dead and drie unto it, that I could not conceive the least dram of refreshment, though I have looked it over.

4. Of all tears, they are the best that are made by the Blood of Christ; and of all joy, that is the sweetest that is mixt with mourning over Christ: 'Tis a goodly thing to be on our knees with Christ in our arms, before God: I hope I know something of these things.

5. I find to this day seven abominations in my heart: 1. Inclinations to unbelief, 2. Suddenlie to forget the love and mercie that Christ manifesteth, 3. A leaning to the Works of the Law, 4. Wandrings and coldness in prayer, 5. To forget to watch for that I pray for, 6. apt to murmur because I have no more, and yet readie to abuse what I have, 7. I can do none of these things which God commands me, but my corruptions will thrust in themselves; When I would do good, evil is present with me.

6. These things I continuallie see and feel, and am afflicted and oppressed with; yet the Wisdom of God doth order them for my good: 1. They make me abhor my self; 2. They keep me from trusting my heart: 3. They convince me of the insufficiency of all inherent righteousness; 4. They shew me the necessity of fleeing to Jesus; 5. They press me to pray unto God; 6. They shew me the need I have to watch and be sober; 7. And provoke me to look to God throw Christ to help me, and carry me throw this world. *Amen.*

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